NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

822·2
Tho/Wos
46512

00046512

THE

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY

Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 June, 2016

SOPHONISBA.

46512
ae

A

TRAGEDY.

Vol. III.

46512

821.2

00046512

TO THE

QUEEN.

MADAM,

THE notice your MAJESTY has condescended to take of the following Tragedy, emboldens me to lay it, in the humbleſt manner, at your MAJESTY's feet. And to whom can this illuſtrious Carthaginian ſo properly fly for protection as to a QUEEN, who commands the hearts of a people more powerful at ſea than Carthage; more flouriſhing in commerce than thoſe firſt merchants; more ſecure againſt conqueſt; and, under a Monarchy, more [illegible] itſelf?

DEDICATION.

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character where both the great and the amiable qualities ſhine forth in full perfection. All words are faint to ſpeak what is univerſally felt, and acknowledged, by a happy people. Permit me therefore only to ſubſcribe myſelf, with the trueſt zeal and veneration,

MADAM,

Your MAJESTY'S

Moſt humble,

Moſt dutiful,

And moſt devoted ſervant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PREFACE.

IT is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many: but those who are best able to discover, will be most ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: and this is a first attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reason that determined me to make choice of this subject. What pleased me particularly, tho' perhaps it will not be least liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great simplicity of the story. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording seveveral revolutions of fortune; by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

This unity of design was always sought after, and admired by the ancients; and the most eminent among the moderns, who understood their writings, have chosen to imitate them in this, from an entire conviction that the reason of it must hold good in all ages. And here allow me to translate a passage from the celebrated Monsieur Racine, *which contains all that I have to say on this head.*

" We must not fancy that this rule has no other foun-
" dation but the caprice of those who made it. Nothing
" can touch us in tragedy, but what is probable. And
" what probability is there, that, in one Day, should
" happen a multitude of things, which could scarce hap-
" pen in several Weeks? There are some who think that
" this simplicity is a mark of barrenness [illegible] invention.
" But they do not consider [illegible] inven-
" tion consists of [illegible] nothing: and
" that this hadd[illegible]

PREFACE.

"rage of Poets, who did not find in their genius either "richneſs or force enough to engage their ſpectators, for "five acts together, by a ſimple action, ſupported by the "violence of paſſions, the beauty of ſentiments, and the "noblenes of expreſſion."—I would not be underſtood to mean, that all theſe things are to be found in my performance: I only ſhew the reader what I aimed at, and how I would have pleaſed him, had it been in my power.

As to the character of Sophoniſba; *in drawing it, I have confined myſelf to the truth of hiſtory. It were an affront to the age, to ſuppoſe ſuch a character out of nature; eſpecially in a country which has produced ſo many great examples of public ſpirit and heroic virtues, even in the ſofter ſex: and I had deſtroyed her character entirely, had I not marked it with that ſtrong love to her country, diſdain of ſervitude, and inborn averſion to the* Romans, *by which all hiſtorians have diſtinguiſhed her. Nor ought her marrying* Maſiniſſa, *while her former husband was ſtill alive, to be reckoned a blemiſh in her character: For, by the laws both of* Rome *and* Carthage, *the captivity of the husband diſſolved the marriage of courſe: as among us, impotence, or adultery: not to mention the reaſons of a moral and public nature, which I have put into her own mouth in the ſcene betwixt her and* Syphax.

This is all I have to ſay of the play itſelf. But I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to thoſe concerned in the repreſentation. They have indeed done me more than juſtice. Whatever was deſigned as amiable and engaging in Maſiniſſa *ſhines out in Mr* Wilke's *action. Mrs* Oldfield, *in the character of* Sophoniſba, *has excelled what, even in the fondneſs of an author, I could either wiſh or imagine. The grace, dignity and happy variety of her action have [illegible] univerſally applauded, and [illegible] inimitable.*

PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr WILLIAMS.

WHEN Learning, after the long Gothic *night,*
Fair, o'er the western world, renew'd its light,
With arts arising Sophonisba *rose:*
The tragic muse, returning, wept her woes,
With her th' Italian *scene first learn'd to glow;*
And the first tears for her were taught to flow.
Her charms the Gallic *muses next inspir'd:*
Corneille *himself saw, wonder'd, and was fir'd*
What foreign theatres with pride have shewn,
Britain, *by juster title, makes her own.*
When Freedom is the cause, 'tis hers to fight;
And hers, when Freedom is the theme, to write.
For this a British Author *bids again*
The heroine rise, to grace the British *scene.*
Here, as in life, she breathes her genuine flame:
She asks what bosom has not felt the same?
Asks of the British Youth--*Is silence there?*
She dares not ask it of the British Fair.
To-night, our home-spun author would be true,
At once, to nature, history, and you.
Well pleas'd to give our neighbours due applause,
He owns their learning, but disdains their laws.
Not to his patient touch, or happy flame;
'Tis to his British *heart he trusts for fame.*
If France *excel him in one free-born thought,*
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.
Nat[illegible] *informe[illegible] of the poet's art,*
Whose [illegible] alone can [illegible] melt the hear[illegible]
Th[illegible] art his [illegible]
Whate'er he [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

The

The Perſons repreſented.

MASINISSA, King of *Maſſylia*,	by	Mr *Wilkes*.
SYPHAX, King of *Maſæſylia*,		Mr *Mills*.
NARVA, Friend to *Maſiniſſa*,		Mr *Roberts*.
SCIPIO, the *Roman* General,		Mr *Williams*.
LÆLIUS, his Lieutenant,		Mr *Bridgwater*.
SOPHONISBA,		Mrs *Oldfield*.
PHOENISSA, her Friend,		Mrs *Roberts*.

Meſſenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE,

The Palace of *CIRTHA*

SOPHONISBA.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. THIS hour, Phœniſſa, this important hour,
Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne
Throws Sophoniſba into Roman chains.
Deteſted thought! For now his utmoſt force
Collected, deſperate, diſtreſs'd, and ſore
From battles loſt; with all the rage of war,
Ill-fated Syphax his laſt effort makes.
But ſay, thou partner of my hopes and fears,
Phœniſſa, ſays while from the lofty tower.

Our

Our straining eyes the field of battle sought,
Ah, thought you not that our Numidian troops
Gave up the bloody field, and scattering fled,
Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious sons
Of still triumphant Rome?

Phœn. Perhaps they wheel'd,
As is their custom, to return more fierce.
Distrust not fortune, while you yet may hope;
And think not, madam, Syphax can resign,
But with his ebbing life, in this last field,
At once a kingdom, and a queen he loves
Beyond ambition's brightest wish; for whom,
Nor mov'd by threats, nor bound by plighted faith,
He scorn'd the Roman friendship (that fair name
For slavery) and from th' engagements broke
Of Scipio, fam'd for every winning art,
The towering Genius of recover'd Rome.

Soph. Oh name him not! These Romans stir my blood
To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune
Of that proud people—Said you not, Phœnissa,
That Syphax lov'd me; which would fire his soul,
And urge him on to death or conquest? True,
He loves me with the madness of desire;
His every passion is a slave to love;
Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,
Nor leagues, nor interest. Hence these endless wars,
These ravag'd countries, these successless fights,
Sustain'd for Carthage; whose defence alone,
Not love, engag'd my [illegible] vow with his.
But kn[illegible] you [illegible] the Roman camp

I have a lover too; a gallant, brave,
And diſappointed lover, full of wrath,
Returning to a kingdom, whence the ſword
Of Syphax drove him?

Phœn. Maſiniſſa?

Soph. He:
Young Maſiniſſa, the Maſſylian king,
The firſt addreſſer of my youth; for whom
My boſom felt a fond beginning wiſh,
Extinguiſh'd ſoon, when once by Scipio's arts
Won over, he became the ſlave of Rome.
E'er ſince, my heart has held him in contempt;
And thrown out each idea of his worth,
That there began to grow: nay, had it been
As much enthrall'd, and ſoft, as her's who ſits
In ſecret ſhades, or by the falling ſtream,
And waſtes her being in unutter'd pangs,
I would have broke, or cur'd it of its fondneſs.

Phœ. Heroic Sophoniſba.

Soph. No, Phœniſſa;
It is not for the daughter of great Aſdrubal,
Deſcended from a long illuſtrious line
Of Carthaginian heroes, who have oft
Fill'd Italy with terror and diſmay,
And ſhook the walls of Rome, to pine in love,
Like a deluded maid; to give her life,
And heart high-beating in her country's cauſe,
To mean domeſtic cares, and idle joys,
Much leſs to one who ſtoops his neck to Rome,
An enemy to Carthage, Maſiniſſa.

Phœn.

Phœn. Think not I mean to check that glorious flame,
That just ambition which exalts your soul,
Glows on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.
Yet would he had been yours, this rising prince!
For, trust me, Fame is fond of Masinissa.
His courage, conduct, deep-experienc'd youth,
And vast unbroken spirit in distress,
Still rising stronger from the last defeat,
Are all the talk and terror too of Afric.
Who has not heard the story of his woes?
How hard he came to his paternal realm:
Whence, soon by Syphax' unrelenting hate,
And jealous Carthage driven, he with a few
Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,
Hem'd in a circle of impending rocks,
That all his followers fell, save fifty horse;
Who thence escap'd thro' secret paths abrupt,
Gain'd the Clupean plain. There overtook,
And urg'd by fierce surrounding foes, he burst
With four alone, sore wounded, thro' their ranks,
And all amidst a deep-swoln torrent plung'd.
Seiz'd with the whirling gulf, two sunk; and two,
With him obliquely hurried down the stream,
Swam to the farther shore. Th' astonish'd foes
Stood check'd and shivering on the gloomy brink,
And deem'd him lost in the devouring flood.
Mean-time the dauntless undespairing youth
Lay in a cave conceal'd; [illegible]
With mountain-herbs [illegible]
Not [illegible], even [illegible]

Stood

Stoop'd his aſpiring mind. What need I ſay,
How once again reſtor'd, and once again
Expell'd, among the Garamantian hills
He ſince has wander'd, till the Roman arm
Reviv'd his cauſe? and who ſhall reign alone,
Syphax or he, this day decides.

Soph. Enough.
Thou need'ſt not blazon thus his fame, Phœniſſa.
Were he as glorious as the pride of woman
Could wiſh, in all her wantonneſs of thought;
The joy of humankind; wiſe, valiant, good;
With every praiſe, with every laurel crown'd;
The warrior's wonder, and the virgin's ſigh:
Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemiſh all,
His mean ſubmiſſion to the Roman yoke;
That, falſe to Carthage, Afric, and himſelf,
With proffer'd hand and knee, he hither led
Theſe ravagers of earth.—But while we talk,
The work of fate goes on; even now, perhaps
My dying country bleeds in every vein,
And the proud victor thunders at our gate.

SCENE II.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, *and to them a* MESSENGER *from the battle.*

Soph. [illegible] Whence art thou? Speak, tho' thy [illegible]
[illegible]
Might [illegible] me.
Meſſ. [illegible]
From you [illegible] I come—

Soph. No more.
At once thy meaning flashes o'er my soul.
Oh all my vanish'd hopes! oh fatal chance
Of undiscerning war! And is all lost?
An universal ruin?
Meff. Madam, all.
Of all our num'rous host scarce one is sav'd.
The king—
Soph. Ah! what of him?
Meff. His fiery steed,
By Masiniffa, the Massylian prince,
Pierc'd, threw him headlong to his clustering foes;
And now he comes in chains.
Soph. O worst of ills!
Absolute gods! All Afric is in chains!
The weeping world in chains!—Oh is there not
A time, a righteous time, reserv'd in fate,
When these oppressors of mankind shall feel
The miseries they give; and blindly fight
For their own fetters too?—The conquering troops,
How points their motion?
Meff. At my heels they came,
Loud-shouting, dreadful in a cloud of dust,
By Masiniffa headed.
Soph. Hark! arriv'd.
The murmuring cloud rolls frighted to the palace.
Thou bleed'st to death, poor faithful wretch; away,
And dress thy wounds, if life be worth thy care;
Tho' Rome, methinks, [illegible]
Would Sophonisba [illegible]
Of boundless [illegible]

SCENE

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, PHORNISBA.

[*After a pauſe.*

Soph. And wherefore not? When liberty is loſt,
Let abject cowards live; but in the brave
It were a treachery to themſelves, enough
To merit chains. And is it fit for me,
Who in my veins, from Aſdrubal deriv'd,
Hold Carthaginian enmity to Rome;
Who ſold my joyleſs youth to Syphax's arms,
For her deſtruction; is it fit for me
To ſit in feeble grief, and trembling wait
Th' approaching victor's rage? reſerv'd in chains
To grace his triumph, and become the ſcorn
Of every Roman dame—Gods! how my ſoul
Diſdains the thought! This, this ſhall ſet it free.

[*Offers to ſtab herſelf.*

Phœn. Hold, Sophoniſba, hold! my friend! my queen!
For whom alone I live! hold your raſh hand,
Nor thro' your guardian boſom ſtab your country.
That is our laſt reſort, and always ſure.
The gracious gods are liberal of death;
To that all bleſſing kind a thouſand ways.
Think [illegible] have [illegible] live to drag a chain,
And wa[illegible] the triumph of inſulting Rome.

No, by theſe tears of loyalty and love!
Ere I beheld ſo vile a ſight, this hand
Should urge the faithful poniard to your heart,
And glory in the deed. But, while hope lives,
Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before
The brave deſpair.

Soph. Thou copy of my ſoul!
And now my friend indeed! Shew me but hope,
One glimpſe of hope, and I'll renew my toils,
Call patience, labour, fortitude again,
The vext unjoyous day, and ſleepleſs night;
Nor ſhrink at danger, any ſhape of death,
Shew me the ſmalleſt hope! Alas, Phœniſſa,
Too fondly confident! Hope lives not here,
Fled with her ſiſter Liberty beyond
The Garamantian hills, to ſome ſteep wild,
Some undiſcover'd country, where the foot
Of Roman cannot come.

Phœn. Yes, there ſhe liv'd
With Maſiniſſa wounded and forlorn,
Amidſt the ſerpents hiſs, the tigers yell.—

Soph. Why nam'ſt thou him?

Phœn. Madam, in this forgive
My forward zeal: from him proceeds our hope.
He lov'd you once; nor is your form impair'd,
Time has matur'd it into ſtronger charms:
Aſk his protection from the Roman power,
You muſt prevail; for Sophoniſba
From Maſiniſſa cannot aſk in vain.

Soph. Now, by the [illegible] genius of my country!

I thank

I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain
Even in deſcending thus to beg protection
From that degenerate youth. But, oh! for thee,
My ſinking country, and again to gain
This hated Rome, what would I not endure?
It ſhall be done, Phœniſſa; though diſguſt
Hold back my ſtruggling heart, it ſhall be done.
But hark! they come: in this diſorder'd tumult
It fits not Sophoniſba to be ſeen.
I'll wait a calmer hour.—Let us retire.

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, SYPHAX *in Chains*, NARVA, *Guards*, &c.

Syph. Is there no dungeon in this city, dark,
As is my troubled ſoul? That thus I am brought
To my own palace, to thoſe rooms of ſtate,
Wont in another manner to receive me,
With other ſigns of royalty than theſe
[*looking on his chains.*

Maſ. I will not wound thee, nor inſult thee, Syphax,
With a recital of thy tyrant crimes.
A captive here I ſee thee, fallen below
My [illegible] revengeful wiſh; and all the rage,
The noble fury [illegible] this morn inflam'd me,
Is ſunk to ſoft [illegible]ion. In the field,
The [illegible], there is the ſcene
Of [illegible] revenge; and I have ſought thee there,

Ke

Turn to the wounded lion seeks his foe,
But meets a broken enemy, disarm'd,
And helpless lies; a falling sword, an eye
With pity flowing, and an arm as weak
As infant-softness, then becomes the brave.
Believe it, Syphax, [illegible] relenting soul
Melts at thy fate.

Syph. This, this, is all I dread,
All I detest, this insolence refin'd,
This affectation of superior goodness.
Pitied by thee!—Is there a form of death,
Of torture, and of infamy like that?
Ye partial gods, to what have you debas'd me?
I feel your worst; why should I fear you more?
Hear me, vain youth! take notice—I abhor
Thy mercy, loath it—Use me like a slave;
As I would thee, (delicious thought!) wert thou
Here crouching in my power.

Mas. Outrageous man!
Thou can'st not drive me, by thy bitterest rage,
To an unmanly deed; not all thy wrongs
Can force my patient soul to stain its virtue.

Syph. I cannot wrong thee. When we drive the spear
Into the monster's heart, to crush the serpent;
Can that be call'd a wrong? 'Tis self-defence.

Mas. I'm loth to hurt thee more. [illegible] vant works
Too fierce already in thy [illegible] breast.
But since thou seem'st to [illegible]
With great destroyers [illegible]
I must reply to thy [illegible]

Bid thee remember, whose accursed sword
Began this work of death; who broke the ties,
The holy ties, attested by the gods,
Which bind the nations in the bond of peace;
Who meanly took advantage of my youth,
Unskill'd in arms, unsettled in my throne,
And drove me to the desert, there to dwell
With kinder monsters; who my cities sack'd,
My country pillag'd, and my subjects murder'd;
Who still pursu'd me with inveterate hate,
When open force prov'd vain, with ruffian arts,
The villain's dagger, base assassination.
And for no reason at all. Brute-violence
Alone thy plea.—What the least provocation,
Say, canst thou but pretend?

Syph. I needed none.
Nature has in my being sown the seeds
Of enmity to thine.—Nay, mark me this;
Couldst thou restore me to my former state,
Strike off the chains, give me my crown again;
Yet must I still, implacable to thee,
Seek eagerly thy death, or die myself.
Life cannot hold us both!—Unequal gods!
Who love to disappoint mankind, and take
All vengeance to yourselves; why to the point
Of my long-flatter'd wishes did ye lift me;
Then sink [illegible] down so low? Just as I aim'd
The glor[illegible] stroke that was to make me happy,
Why did you blast [illegible] long extended arm?
But [illegible] is your cruel sport?
Wh[illegible] is human life?

Mas. [illegible] always join'd.

With

With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,
In irreligion to the ruling gods;
Whose schemes our peevish ignorance arraigns,
Our thoughtless pride.—Thy lost condition, Syphax,
Is nothing to the tumult of thy breast.
There lies the sting of evil, there the drop
That poisons nature.—Ye mysterious powers!
Whose ways are ever-gracious, ever-just,
As ye think wisest, best, dispose of me:
But, whether thro' your gloomy depths I wander,
Or on your mountains walk; give me the calm,
The steady, smiling soul; where wisdom sheds
Eternal sunshine, and eternal peace.
Then, if misfortune comes, she brings along
The bravest virtues. And so many great
Illustrious spirits have convers'd with wo,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate Distress, and make Ambition
Even wish the frown beyond the smile of Fortune.

Syph. Torture and racks! This is the common trick
Of insolent success, unsuffering pride,
This prate of patience, and I know not what;
'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant;
And only tends to make me scorn thee more.
But why this talk? In mercy send me hence!
Yet—ere I go.—Oh save me from distraction!
I know, hot youth, thou burnest for my queen;
But by the majesty of ruin[illegible]
And that commanding glory [illegible] surrounds her,
I charge thee, touch her not!

Masi. No, Syphax, no.

Thou need'ſt not charge me. That where mean
indeed,
A triumph that to thee. But could I ſtoop
Again to love her; Thou, what right haſt thou,
A captive, to her bed? Thy bonds divorce
And free her from thy power. All laws in this,
Roman and Carthaginian, all agree.

Syph. Here, here, begins the bitterneſs of ruin;
Here my chains grind me firſt!

Maſ. Poor Sophoniſba!
She too becomes the prize of conquering Rome;
What moſt her heart abhors. Alas, how hard
Will ſlavery ſit on her exalted ſoul!
She never will endure it, ſhe will die.
For not a Roman burns with nobler ardor,
A higher ſenſe of liberty than ſhe;
And tho' ſhe marry'd thee, her only ſtain,
Falſe to my youth, and faithleſs to her vows;
Yet I muſt own it, from a worthy cauſe,
From public ſpirit, did her fault proceed.

Syph. Muſt I then hear her praiſe from thee?
Confuſion!
Oh! for a lonely dungeon! where I rather
Would talk with my own groans, and breathe re-
venge,
Than in the manſions of the bleſt with thee.
Hell! Whither muſt I go?

Maſ. Unhappy man!
And is thy breaſt determin'd againſt peace,
Or comfort ſhun?

Syph. Or all, but death, from thee.

Maſ.

Mas. Nerva, be Syphax thy peculiar care;
And use him well, with tenderneſs and honour.
This evening Lælius, and to-morrow Scipio,
To Cirtha comes. Then let the Romans take
Their priſoner.

Syph. There ſhines a gleam of hope
Acroſs the gloom—From thee deliver'd!—Eaſe
Breathes in that thought—Lead on—My heart
grows lighter!

SCENE V.

MASINISSA.

What dreadful havoc in the human breaſt
The paſſions make, when unconfin'd, and mad,
They burſt unguided by the mental eye,
The light of reaſon, which in various ways
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill!
O ſave me from the tumult of the ſoul!
From the wild beaſts within!—For circling ſands
When the ſwift whirlwind whelms them o'er the
lands;
The roaring deeps that to the clouds ariſe,
While through the ſtorm the darting lightning flies;
The monſter-brood to which this heat gives birth,
The blazing city, and the gaping earth:
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combin'd,
Are gentle to the tempeſt of the mind.

The End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Maſ. THOU good old man, by whom my youth was form'd,
The firm companion of my various life,
I own, 'tis true, that Sophoniſba's image
Lives in my boſom ſtill; and at each glance
I take in ſecret of the bright idea,
A ſtrange diſorder ſeizes on my ſoul,
Which burns with ſtronger glory. Need I ſay,
How once ſhe had my vows? Till Scipio came,
Reſiſtleſs man! like a deſcending God,
And ſnatch'd me from the Carthaginian ſide
To nobler Rome; beneath whoſe laurel'd brow,
And fav'ring eye, the nations grow polite,
Humane, and happy. Then thou may'ſt remember,
Such is this woman's high impetuous ſpirit,
That all-controuling love ſhe bears her country,
Her Carthage; what for this ſhe ſacrific'd
To Syphax unbelov'd, her blooming years,
And won him off from Rome.
Nar. My generous prince!
Applauding Fame ſo of thy choice approves.

Fame claps her wings, and virtue ſmiles on thee,
Of peace thou ſoftner, and thou ſoul of war!
But oh beware of that fair foe to glory,
Woman! and moſt of Carthaginian woman!
Who has not heard of fatal Punic guile?
Of their ſtoln conqueſts? their inſidious leagues?
Their Aſdrubals? their Hannibals? with all
Their wily heroes? And, if ſuch their men,
What muſt their women be?

Maſ. You make me ſmile,
I thank thy honeſt zeal. But never dread
The firmneſs of my heart, the ſtrong attachment,
I hold to Rome, to Scipio, and to Glory.
Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget
The grace of Sophoniſha; now ſhe look'd,
And talk'd, and mov'd, a Pallas, or a Juno!
Accompliſh'd even in trifles, when ſhe ſtoop'd
From higher thoughts, and with a ſoften'd eye
Gave her quick ſpirit into gayer life.
Then every word was ſivelineſs, and wit;
We heard the Muſes' ſong; and the dance ſwam
Thro' all the maze of harmony. Believe me
I do not flatter; yet my panting ſoul
To Scipio's friendſhip, to the fair purſuit
Of fame, and for my people's happineſs,
Reſign'd this Sophoniſha; and tho' now
Conſtrain'd by ſweet neceſſity to ſee her,
A captive in my power, yet will I ſtill
Reſign her.

Nar. I'll not doubt thy fortitude
My Maſiniſſa, thy exalted parpoſe.

Not

Not to be loſt in love; but ah! we know not,
Oft, till experience ſighs it to the ſoul,
The boundleſs witchcraft of enſnaring woman,
And our own ſlippery hearts. From Scipio learn
The temperance of heroes. I'll recount
Th' inſtructive ſtory, what theſe eyes beheld;
Perhaps you've heard it; but 'tis pleaſing ſtill,
Tho' told a thouſand times.

Maſ. I burn to hear it.

Loſt by my late misfortunes in the deſert,
I liv'd a ſtranger to the voice of fame,
To Scipio's laſt exploits. Indulge me now.
Great actions, even recounted, raiſe the mind;
But when a friend has done them, then, my Narva,
They doubly charm us; then with more than wonder,
Even with a ſort of vanity we liſten.

Nar. When to his glorious, firſt eſſay in war,
New Carthage fell; there all the flower of Spain
Were kept in hoſtage; a full field preſenting
For Scipio's generoſity to ſhine.
And then it was, that when the hero heard
How I to thee belong'd, he, with large gifts,
And friendly words diſmiſs'd me.

Maſ. I remember.
And in his favour that engag'd me firſt.
But to the ſtory.

Nar. With [illegible]
Struck every heart, was this—A [illegible] virgin,
Conſpicuous far o'er all the captive dames,
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, and

Young, fresh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,
As when the blue sky trembles through a cloud
Of purest white. A secret charm combin'd
Her features, and infus'd inchantment through
them.
Her shape was harmony, but eloquence
Beneath her beauty fails: which seem'd on purpose,
By nature laviſh'd on her, that mankind
Might see the virtue of a hero tried
Almoſt beyond the ſtretch of human force.
Soft as ſhe paſs'd along, with downcaſt eyes,
Where gentle ſorrow ſwell'd, and now and then
Dropt o'er her modeſt cheek a trickling tear,
The Roman legions languiſh'd: and hard war
Felt more than pity. Even their chief himſelf,
As on his high tribunal rais'd he ſat,
Turn'd from the dangerous ſight, and chiding aſk'd
His officers, if, by this gift, they meant
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.

Maſ. Oh Gods! my fluttering heart! On, ſtop not, Narva.

Nar. She, queſtion'd of her birth, in trembling accents,
With tears and bluſhes broken, told her tale.
But when he found her royally deſcended,
Of her old captive parents the ſole joy;
And that a hapleſs Celtiberian prince
Her lover and belov'd, [illegible]
His loſt dominions, and for her ſake
Wept out his tender ſoul; [illegible] the heart
Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike Roman,

Felt

Felt all the great divinity of virtue.
His wishing youth stood check'd, his tempting power,
Restrain'd by kind humanity.—At once
He for her parents and her lover call'd.
The various scene imagine: how his troops
Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant;
While stretch'd below the trembling suppliants lay,
Rack'd by a thousand mingling passions, fear,
Hope, jealousy disdain, submission, grief,
Anxiety, and love in every shape.
To these as different sentiments succeeded,
As mixt emotions, when the man divine
Thus the dread silence to the lover broke.
"We both are young, both charm'd. The right of war
"Has put thy beauteous mistress in my power:
"With whom I could in the most sacred ties
"Live out a happy life: but know that Romans
"Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.
"Then take her to thy soul; and with her take
"Thy liberty and kingdom. In return
"I ask but this. When you behold these eyes,
"These charms, with transport; be a friend to Rome."

Mas. There spoke the soul of Scipio—But the lover.

Nar. Joy and [illegible] wonder held them mute;
While the loud camp, and all the clust'ring crowd,
That hung [illegible] with repeated shouts.
Fame took the alarm, and thro' resounding Spain

Blew ſuſt the fair report; which, more than arms,
Admiring nations to the Romans gun'd.
Maſ. My friend in glory! thy awaken'd prince
Springs at thy noble tale. It fires my ſoul,
And nerves each thought anew; apt oft perhaps,
Too much, too much, to ſlacken into love.
But now the ſoft oppreſſion flies; and all
My mounting powers expand to deeds like theſe.
Who, who would live, my Narva, juſt to breathe
This idle air, and indolently run,
Day after day, the ſtill returning round
Of life's mean offices, and ſickly joys;
But, in the ſervice of mankind, to be
A guardian god below—Still to employ
The mind's brave ardour in heroic aims,
Such as may raiſe us o'er the groveling herd,
And make us ſhine for ever, That is life.
Bleed every vein about me; every nerve
With anguiſh tremble; every ſinew ake;
The third time may I loſe my crown; again
Wander the falſe inhoſpitable Syrts;
If to reward my toils, the gods will grant me
To ſhare the wreath of fame on Scipio's brow.
But ſee, ſhe comes, the beauteous Sophoniſba!
Behold, my friend, mark her majeſtic port!

SCENE

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA, NARVA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. Behold, victorious prince! the ſcene reverſ'd;
And Sophoniſba kneeling here; a captive,
O'er whom the gods, thy fortune, and thy virtue,
Give thee unqueſtion'd power of life and death.
If ſuch a one may raiſe her ſuppliant voice,
Once muſic to thy ear; if ſhe may touch
Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand;
Oh liſten, Maſiniſſa! Let thy ſoul
Intenſely liſten! While I fervent pray,
And ſtrong adjure thee, by that regal ſtate,
In which with equal pomp we lately ſhone;
By the Numidian name, our common boaſt,
And by thoſe houſehold-gods; who may, I wiſh,
With better omens take thee to this palace,
Than Syphax hence they ſent. As is thy pleaſure,
In all beſide determine of my fate.
This, this alone I beg. Never, oh never!
Into the cruel, proud, and hated power
Of Romans let me fall. Since angry heaven
Will have it ſo that I muſt be a ſlave,
And that a golden chain muſt bind theſe hands,
It were ſome little ſoftning to my doom,
To call a kindred ſon of the ſame clime,
A native of Numidia, my lord.
But if thou canſt not ſave me from the Romans,

If this lad favour be beyond thy power;
At least to give me death is what thou canst.
Here strike—my naked bosom courts thy sword;
And my last breath shall bless thee, Masinissa!

Mas. Rise, Sophonisba, rise. To see thee thus
Is a revenge I scorn; and all the man
Within me, though much injur'd by thy pride,
And spirit too tempestuous for thy sex,
Yet blushes to behold, thus at my feet,
Thus prostrate low, her, for whom kings have kneel'd,
The fairest, but the falsest of her sex.

Soph. Spare thy reproach.—'Tis cruel thus to lose
In rankling discord, and ungenerous strife,
The few remaining moments that divide me
From the most loath'd of evils, Roman bondage!
Yes, shut thy heart against me; shut thy heart
Against compassion, every human thought,
Even recollected love: yet know, rash youth!
That when thou seest me swell their lofty triumph,
Thou seest thyself in me. This is my day;
To-morrow will be thine. But here, be sure,
Here will I lie on this vile earth, forlorn,
Of hope abandon'd, since despis'd by thee;
These locks all loose and sordid in the dust;
This sullied bosom [illegible] to the [illegible],
Till the remorseless soldier come, [illegible] fierce
From recent blood, and in thy [illegible];
Lays raging his rude sanguine [illegible]

On theſe weak limbs; and tortures them with
chains,
Then if no friendly ſteel, no nectar'd draught
Of deadly poiſon, can enlarge my ſoul:
I will indignant burſt from a ſlave's body,
And, join'd to mighty Dido, ſcorn ye all.
Maſ. Oh Sophoniſba! 'tis not ſafe to hear thee;
And I miſtook my heart, to truſt it thus.
Hence let me fly.
Soph. You ſhall not, Maſiniſſa!
Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever;
Here unremitting grow, till you conſent.
And canſt thou think, oh! canſt thou think to
leave me,
Expos'd, defenceleſs, wretched, here alone,
A prey to Romans flush'd with blood and conqueſt,
The ſubject of their ſcorn or baſer love?
Sure Maſiniſſa cannot; and, tho' chang'd,
Tho' cold as that averted look he wears;
Sure love can ne'er in generous breaſts be loſt
To that degree, as not from ſhame and outrage
To ſave what once they lov'd.
Maſ. Enchantment! Madneſs!
What would'ſt thou, Sophoniſba? Oh my heart!
My treacherous heart!
Soph. What would I, Maſiniſſa?
My mean ſuit fits blushing on my cheek.
To be thy [illegible] you [illegible] is what I beg;
Here Sophoniſba kneels to [illegible] thy ſlave;
Yet [illegible]. But thou'rt a ſlave thyſelf,
And canſt not ſave the Romans ſave one woman;

Her,

Her, who was once the triumph of thy ſoul;
Are they ſeduc'd it by their lying glory.
Immortal gods! and am I fallen ſo low?
Scorn'd by a lover? by the man whom once
My heart, alas! too much inclin'd to love,
Before he ſunk into the ſlave of Rome?
Nought can be worth this baſeneſs, life nor empire!
I loath me for it—On this kinder earth,
Then leave me, leave me, to deſpair and death!

Maſ. I cannot bear her tears.—Riſe, quickly riſe,
In all the conquering majeſty of charms,
O Sophoniſba, riſe! while here I ſwear,
By the tremendous powers that rule mankind!
By heaven and earth, and hell! by love and glory!
The Romans ſhall not hurt you—Romans cannot;
For Rome is generous as the gods themſelves,
And honours, not inſults, a generous foe.
Yet ſince you dread them, take this royal hand,
The pledge of furety, by which kings are bound;
By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you,
With all the ſoftneſs of remember'd love,
All that can ſooth thy fate, and make thee happy.

Soph. I thank thee, Maſiniſſa! now the ſame,
The ſame bright youth, exalted, full of ſoul,
With whom in happier days I us'd to paſs
The tender hour; while, dawning fair in love,
All ſong and ſweetneſs, life ſet joyous out;
Ere the black tempeſt of ambition roſe,
And drove us different ways.—Thus dreſt in war,
In nodding plumes, o'ercaſt with ſullen thought,
With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not;

But

But now breaks out the beauteous sun anew,
The gay Numidian flines, who warm'd me once,
Whose love was glory.---Vain ideas, hence!
—Long since, my heart, to nobler passions known,
Has your acquaintance scorn'd.

Mas. Oh! while you talk,
Enchanting fair one! my deluded thought
Runs back to days of love; when fancy still
Found worlds of beauty, ever rising new
To the transported eye; when flattering hope
Form'd endless prospects of increasing bliss;
And still the credulous heart believ'd them all,
Even more than love could promise.---But the scene
Is full of danger for a youthful eye;
I must not, dare not, will not look that way.
O hide it, wisdom, glory, from my view!
Or in sweet ruin I shall sink again.
Distemper clouds thy cheek; thy colour goes.
Retire, and from the troubles of the day
Repose thy weary soul, worn out with care,
And rough unhappy thought.

Soph. May Masinissa,
Ne'er want the goodness he has shewn to me.

SCENE III.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Mas. The danger's o'er, I've heard the Siren's song,
Yet still to virtue hold my steady course.

I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,
And own them juſt; for ſhe has beauty, Narva,
So full, ſo perfect, with ſo great a ſoul
Inform'd, ſo rais'd with animating ſpirit,
As ſtrikes like lightning from the hand of Jove,
And raiſes love to glory.

Narv. Ah, my Prince!
Too true, it is too true; her fatal charms
Are powerful, and to Maſiniſſa's heart
Know but too well the way. And art thou ſure,
That the ſoft poiſon, which within thy veins
Lay unextinguiſh'd, is not rous'd anew,
Is not this moment working thro' thy ſoul?
Doſt thou not love? Confeſs.

Maſ. What ſaid my friend
Of poiſon? love? of loving Sophoniſba?
Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty;
And he who does not, is as dull as earth,
The cold unanimated form of man,
Eye lighted up with the celeſtial fire.
Where'er ſhe goes ſtill admiration gazes,
And liſtens while ſhe talks. Even thou thyſelf,
Who ſaw'ſt her with the malice of a friend,
Even thou thyſelf admir'ſt her.—Doſt thou not?
Say, ſpeak ſincerely.

Narv. She has charms indeed;
But has ſhe charms like virtue? Tho' majeſtic,
Does ſhe command us with a force like glory?

Maſ. All glory's in her eyes! Perfection thence
Looks from its throne; and on her ample brow
Sits majeſty. Her features glow with life,

Warm

Warm with heroic soul. Her mein! she walks,
As when a towering goddess treads this earth.
But when her language flows; when such a mind
Descends to sooth, to sigh, to weep, to grasp
The tottering knee; oh! Narva, Narva, oh!
Expression here is dumb.

Nar. Alas! my Lord,
Is this the talk of sober admiration?
Are these the sallies of a heart at ease?
Of Scipio's friend? Is this thy steady virtue!

Mas. I tell thee once again, too cautious man,
That when a woman begs, a matchless woman,
A woman once belov'd, a fallen queen,
A Sophonisba! when she twines her charms
Around her soul, and all her power of looks,
Of tears, of sighs, of softness, plays upon us;
He's more or less than man who can resist her.
For me, my stedfast soul approves, nay more,
Exults in the protection it has promis'd.
And nought, tho' plighted honour did not bind me.
Should shake the virtuous purpose of my heart;
Nought, by th' avenging gods! who heard my vow,
And hear me now again.

Nar. And was it then
For this you conquer'd?

Mas. Yes, and triumph in it.
This was my fondest wish; the very point,
The plume of glory, the delicious prize
Of bleeding wars, I must have been a brute,
A greater monster than Numidia breeds,
A horror to myself, if on the ground,

Cast

Coldly from me, left illuſtrious fair
Had left to bondage, bitterneſs, and death.
Nor is there ought in war worth what I feel;
In pomp and hollow ſtate, like the ſweet ſenſe
Of inſelt bliſs, which the reflection gives me,
Of having thus ſuch excellence and beauty
From what the generous ſoul abhors the moſt.

Narv. My friend! my royal lord! alas! you ſlide,
You ſink from virtue. On the giddy brink
Of fate you ſtand.—One ſtep, and all is loſt!

Maſ. No more, no more! if this is being loſt,
And ruſhing down the precipice of fate;
Then down I go, far far beyond the reach
Of ſcrupulous dull precaution. Leave me, Narva;
I want to be alone, to find ſome ſhade,
Some ſolitary gloom; there to ſhake off
Theſe harſh tumultuous cares that vex my life,
This ſick ambition on itſelf recoiling;
And there to liſten to the gentle voice,
The ſigh of peace, ſomething, I know not what,
That whiſpers tranſport to my heart.—Farewell.

SCENE IV.

NARVA, *alone.*

Struck, and he knows it not---So when the field
Elate in heart, the warrior ſcorns to yield;
The ſtreaming blood can ſcarce convince his eyes;
Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

The End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, *alone.*

IN vain I wander thro' the ſhade for Peace;
'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,
That there the goodneſs talks—But in my breaſt,
Some buſy thought, ſome ſecret eating pang,
Still reſtleſs throbs, on Sophoniſba ſtill
Earneſt, intent, devoted all to her,
What may this mean? 'Tis love, almighty love!
Returning on me with a ſtronger tide.
Come to my breaſt, thou roſy-ſmiling god!
Come unconfin'd! bring all thy joys along.
All thy ſoft cares, and mix them copious here.
Quick, let me fly to her; and there forget
This tedious abſence, war, ambition, noiſe,
Friendſhip itſelf, the vanity of fame,
And all but love, for love is more than all!

SCENE II.

MASSINISSA, NARVA.

Maſ. Welcome again, my friend—Come nearer, Narva;
Lend me thine arm, and I will tell thee all,
Unfold my ſecret heart, whoſe every pulſe
With Sophoniſba beats.—Nay, hear me out—
Swift, as I mus'd, the conflagration ſpread;
At once too ſtrong too general, to be quench'd.
I love, and I approve it, doat upon her,
Even think theſe minutes loſt I talk with thee.
Heavens! what emotions have poſſeſs'd my ſoul!
Snatch'd by a moment into years of paſſion.

Nar. Ah, Maſiniſſa!—

Maſ. Argue not againſt me.
Talk down the circling winds that lift the deſert;
And when by lightning fir'd the foreſts blaze,
Talk down the flame, but not my ſtronger love.
I have for love a thouſand thouſand reaſons,
Dear to the heart, and potent o'er the ſoul.
My every thought, reflection, mem'ry, all
Are a perpetual ſpring of tenderneſs;
Oh, Sophoniſba! I am wholly thine.

Nar. Is this deceitful day then come to nought,
This day, that ſet thee on a doubtful throne?
That gave thee Syphax chain'd, thy deadly foe?
With perfect conqueſt crown'd thee, perfect lord?

Is it so soon eclips'd? and does yon sun,
Yon setting sun, who this fair morning saw thee
Ride through the ranks of long extended war,
As radiant as himself; and when the storm
Began, beheld thee tread the rising surge
Of battle high, and drive it on the foe;
Does he now, blushing, see thee sunk so weak?
Caught in a smile? the captive of a look?
I cannot name it without tears.

Mas. Away!
I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,
Smooth'd o'er, and gilded with the name of glory,
In vain you spread the martial field to me,
My happier eyes are turn'd another way,
Behold it not; or, if they do, behold it
Shrunk up, far off, a visionary scene,
As to the waking man appears the dream.

Nar. Or rather as realities appear,
The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,
In sick disorder'd dreams.

Mas. Think not I scorn
The task of heroes, when oppression rages,
And lawless violence confounds the world.
Who would not bleed with transport for his country,
Tear every tender passion from his heart,
And greatly die to make a people happy;
Ought not to taste of happiness himself,
And [illegible] ul'd indeed.—But sure, my friend,
There is a name for love; or life were vile,
A tedious circle of unjoyous days
With senseless hurry fill'd, distasteful, wretched,

 Till

Till love comes ſtealing in, and brings his ſweets,
His healing ſweets, ſoft cares, tranſporting joys,
That make the poor account of life complete,
And juſtify the gods.

Nar. Miſtaken Prince,
I blame not love. But—

Maſ. Slander not my paſſion.
I've ſuffer'd thee too far.—Take heed, old man,—
Love will not bear an accuſation, Narva.

Nar. I'll ſpeak the truth, when truth and friendſhip call,
Nor fear thy frown unkind.—Thou haſt no right
To Sophoniſba; ſhe belongs to Rome.

Maſ. Ha! ſhe belongs to Rome.—'Tis true—My thoughts,
Where have you wander'd, not to think of this?
Think ere I promis'd? ere I lov'd?—Confuſion!
I know not what to ſay—I ſhould have lov'd,
Tho' Jove in muttering thunder had forbid it.
But Rome will not refuſe ſo ſmall a boon,
Whoſe gifts are kingdoms; Rome muſt grant it ſure,
One captive to my wiſh, one poor requeſt,
So ſmall to them, but oh ſo dear to me!
In this my heart confides.

Nar. Deſerve love!
Thro' what wild projects is the frantic mind
Beguil'd by thee?—And think'ſt thou that the Romans,
The ſenators of Rome, theſe gods on earth,

Wiſe

Wiſe, ſteady to the right, ſeverely juſt,
All uncorrupt, and like eternal fate
Not to be mov'd, will liſten to the ſigh
Of idle love? They who when virtue calls,
Will not the voice itſelf of nature hear,
But bid their children bleed before their eyes?
Will they regard the light fantaſtic pangs
Of a fond heart? and with thy kingdom give thee
Their moſt inveterate foe, from their firm ſide,
Like Syphax, to delude thee? and the point
Of their own bounty on themſelves to turn?
Thou canſt not hope it ſure.—Impoſſible!

Maſ. What ſhall I do? be now the friend exerted.
For love and honour preſs me; love and honour,
All that is dear and excellent in life,
All that or ſooths the man or lifts the hero,
Engage my ſoul.

Nar. Raſh was your vow, my lord.
I know not what to counſel.—When you vow'd,
You vow'd what was not in your power to grant;
And therefore 'tis not binding.

Maſ. Never! Never!
Oh never will I falſify that vow!
Ere then deſtruction ſeize me! Yes, ye Romans,
If it be ſo, there, take your kingdom back
Your friendſhip, your eſteem, all, all but her.
Hold,—Let me think a while—It ſhall be ſo!
By all the conſpiring gods that prompt my thought,
This very night ſhall ſolemnize our vows;
And the next joyous ſun, that viſits Afric,
See Sophoniſba ſeated on my throne.—

Then must they spare my queen.--They will not, surely,
They will not dare to force my consort from me.
Nor. And is it possible, ye gods that rule us!
Can Massinissa in his pride of youth,
In his meridian glory shining wide,
The light of Afric, can the friend of Scipio
Take a false woman to his nuptial bed,
Who scorn'd him for a tyrant old and cruel,
His rancorous foe? and gave her untouch'd bloom,
Her spring of charms to Syphax?
Maf. Curst remembrance!
This, this, has thrown a serpent to my heart;
While it o'erflow'd with tenderness, with joy,
With all the sweetness of exulting love.
Now nought but gall is there, and burning poison.
Yes, it was so!--Curse on her vain ambition!
What had her meddling sex to do with states?
Forsook for him, just gods! for hateful Syphax,
My tender, faithful love, for his gross passion!
The thought is hell!—Oh I had treasur'd up
A world of indignation, years of scorn;
But her sad suppliant witchcraft sooth'd it down.
Where is she now, that it may burst upon her?
Haste, bring her to me; though my plighted faith,
Shall save her from the Roman, yet I'll tell her,
That I will never, never see her more!
Ha! there she comes--Pernicious fair one!--Leave me.

SCENE

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Soph. Forgive this quick return.—The rage, confuſion,
And mingled paſſions of this luckleſs day,
Made me forget another warm requeſt
I had to beg of generous Maſiniſſa;
For oh to whom, ſave to the generous, can
The miſerable fly?--But much diſturb'd
You look, and ſcowl upon me a denial.
Repentance frowns on your contracted brow.
Already, weary of my ſinking fate,
You ſeem to droop; and for unhappy Syphax
I ſhall implore in vain.

Maſ. For Syphax? vengeance!
And canſt thou mention him? O grant me breath!

Soph. I know, young prince, how deep he has provok'd thee;
How keen he ſought thy youth; thro' what a fire
Of great diſtreſs, from which you come the brighter.
On mere indifferent objects, common bounty
Will ſhower relief; but when our biteреſt foe
Lies ſunk, diſarm'd, and deſolate, then! then!
To feel the mercies of a pitying God,
To make him from the caſt, and that beſt way
To triumph o'er him, is heroic goodneſs.
Oh let unhappy Syphax touch thy heart,
Victorious Maſiniſſa!

Maſ. Monſtrous hiſ—

Still

Still doth thou blaſt me with that curſed name!
The very name thy conſcious guilt ſhould ſhun.
Had he but driven me from my native throne,
From regal pomp and luxury, to dwell
Among the foreſt-beaſts; to bear the pomp
Of red Numidian ſuns, and the dank dew
Of cold unſhelter'd nights; to mix with wolves,
To hunt with hungry tigers for my prey,
And thirſt with Dipſads on the burning ſand;
I could have thank'd him for his angry leſſon;
The fair occaſion that his rage afforded
Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,
Still riſing ſtronger on incumbent fate.
But there is one unpardonable outrage,
That ſcorches up the tear in pity's eye,
And even ſweet mercy's ſelf converts to gall.
I cannot—will not name it—Down my heart,
My ſwelling heart!

Soph. Ah! whence this ſudden ſtorm,
That hurries all thy ſoul?

Maſ. And doſt thou aſk?
Aſk thy own faithleſs heart, ſnatch'd from my vows,
From the warm wiſhes of my ſpringing youth,
And given to that old hated monſter, Syphax.
Perfidious Sophoniſba!

Soph. Nay, no more.
With too much truth I can return thy charge.
Why didſt thou drive me to that cruel choice?
Why leave me with my country to deſtruction?
Why break thy love, thy faith, and join the Romans?

Maſ.

Maſ. By heavens! the Romans were my better genius,
Sav'd me from ſhame, and form'd my youth to glory;
But for the Romans I had been a ſavage,
A wretch like Syphax, a forgotten thing,
The tool of Carthage.

Soph. Meddle not with Carthage,
Impatient youth; for that I will not bear;
'Tho' I am here thy ſlave, I will not bear it.
Not one baſe word of Carthage—on thy ſoul!

Maſ. How vain thy frenzy? Go, command thy ſlaves,
Thy fools, thy Syphaxes; but I will ſpeak,
Speak loud of Carthage, call it falſe, ungenerous;
The Romans are the light, the glory—

Soph. Romans!
Perdition on the Romans!---on their friends,
On all but thee.--The Romans are the ſcourge
Of the vext world, deſtroyers of mankind,
And all beneath the ſmooth diſſembling maſk
Of juſtice, and compaſſion; as if ſlave
Was but another name for civiliz'd.
Againſt her tyrant power, each generous ſword
Of every nation ſhould be drawn--While Carthage
Unblemiſh'd riſes on the baſe of commerce,
Founds her fair empire on the common good,
And aſks of heaven nought but the winds and tides
To carry plenty, letters, ſcience, wealth,
Civility, and grandeur round the world.

Maſ.

Maſ. No more compare them! for the gods themſelves
Declare for Rome.
Soph. It was not always ſo.
The gods declar'd for Hannibal; when Italy
Blaz'd all around him, all her ſtreams ran blood;
And when at Trebia, Thraſymene, and Cannæ,
The Carthaginian ſword with Roman blood
Was drunk—Oh, that he then, on that dread day,
While lifeleſs conſternation blackened Rome,
Had raz'd th' accurſed city to the ground,
And ſav'd the world!—When will it come again,
A day ſo glorious, and ſo big with vengeance,
On thoſe my ſoul abhors?
Maſ. Avert it heaven!
The Romans not enſlave, but ſave the world
From Carthaginian rage—
Soph. I'll bear no more!
Nor tenderneſs, nor life, nor liberty,
Nothing ſhall make me bear it.—Rather, rather,
Deteſted as ye are, ye Romans, take me—
Oh, pitying take me to your nobler chains,
And ſave me from this abject youth, your ſlave!
---How can'ſt thou kill me thus?
Maſ. I meant it not.
I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair one!
How this alone might bind me to the Romans;
That, in a freſh and riſing hour, they ſnatch'd me
From the perdition of thy love, which fell,
Like baleful lightning, where I moſt could wiſh,
And prov'd deſtruction to my mortal foe.

Oh

Oh pleaſing! fortunate!
Soph. I thank them too.
By heavens! for once, I love them; ſince they turn'd
My better thoughts from thee. Thou---but I will not
Give thee the name thy mean ſervility
From my juſt ſcorn deſerves.
Maſ. Oh freely call me
By every name thy fury can inſpire;
Delight me with thy hate.---I love no more--
It will not hurt me, Sophoniſba.--Love,
Long ſince I gave it to the paſſing winds,
And would not be a lover for the world.
A lover is the very fool of nature,
Made ſick by his own wantonneſs of thought
His fever'd fancy: while, to your own charms
Imputing all, you ſwell with boundleſs pride.
Shame on the wretch! he ſhould be driven from men,
To live with Aſian ſlaves, in one ſoft herd,
All worthleſs, all ridiculous together.
For me: this moment, here I mean to bid
Farewell, a glad farewell to love and thee.
Soph. With all my ſoul, farewell! yet ere you go;
Know that my ſpirit burns as high as thine,
As high to glory, and as low to love.
Thy [illegible] are void; and I abſolve thee
Here in the preſence of the liſtning gods.--
Take thy repented vows--To proud Cornelia

I'd

I'd rather be a ſlave to Scipio's mother,
Than queen of all Numidia, by the favour
Of him, who dare inſult the helpleſs thus.
[*Parting.*

Still doſt thou ſtay? behold me then again,
Hopeleſs, and wild, a loſt abandon'd ſlave.
And now thy brutal purpoſe muſt be gain'd.
Away, thou cruel, and ungenerous, go!

Maſ. No, not for worlds would I reſume my vow!
Diſhonour blaſt me then! all kind of ills
Fill up my cup of bitterneſs, and ſhame!
When I reſign thee to triumphant Rome.
Oh lean not thus dejected to the ground!
The ſight is miſery. What roots me here?
[*Aſide.*
Alas! I have urg'd my fooliſh heart too far;
And love depreſs'd recoils with greater force.
Oh Sophoniſba!

Soph. By thy pride ſhe dies.
Inhuman prince!

Maſ. Thine is the triumph, Love!
By heaven and earth! I cannot hold it more.
Wretch that I was, to [illegible] th' unhappy thus;
The faireſt too, the deareſt of her ſex;
For whom my ſoul could die!--Turn, quickly turn,
O Sophoniſba! [illegible] my glory
Turn and forgive the violence of love,
Of love that knows no bounds!

Soph. And can it be?
Can that ſoft paſſion prove ſo fierce of heart,

As

As on the tears of misery, the sight
Of death, to feast? to torture what it loves?
Mas. Yes it can be, thou goddess of my soul!
Whose each emotion is but varied love,
All over love, its powers, its passions, all:
Its anger, indignation, fury, love;
Its pride, disdain, even detestation, love;
And when it, wild, resolves to love no more,
Then is the triumph of excessive love.
Did'st thou not mark me? mark the dubious rage,
That tore my heart with anguish while I talk'd?
Thou didst; and must forgive so kind a fault.
What would thy trembling lips?
Soph. O let me die.
For such another storm, so much contempt
Thrown out on Carthage, so much praise on Rome,
Were worse than death. Why should I longer tire
My weary fate? The most relentless Roman
What could he more?
Mas. Oh Sophonisba, hear!
See me thy suppliant now. Talk not of death.
I have no life but thee.—Alas! alas!
Hadst thou a little tender[illegible] for me,
The smallest part of what I feel, thou wouldst—
What wouldst thou not forgive? [illegible] how indeed,
How can I hope it? Yet I from this moment
Will so devote my being to thy pleasure,
So live alone to gain thee [illegible] thou must,
[illegible] there is human nature in thy breast,
[illegible] some relenting warmth.

Soph. Well, well, 'tis paſt.
To be inexorable ſuits not ſlaves.
Maſ. Spare, ſpare that word; it ſtabs me to the ſoul;
My crown, my life, and liberty are thine.
Oh give my paſſion way! My heart is full,
Oppreſt by love; and I could number tears,
With all the dews that ſprinkle o'er the morn.
Oh! thou haſt melted down my ſtubborn ſoul
To female tenderneſs--Enough, enough,
Have we been cheated by the trick of ſtate,
For Rome and Carthage ſuffer'd much too long;
And, led, by gaudy phantoms, wander'd far,
Far from our bliſs. But now ſince met again,
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection,
In theſe bleſt arms; ſince fate too preſſes hard,
Since Rome and ſlavery drive thee to the brink;
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,
Secure my bliſs, our future fortunes blend,
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,
And on theſe lovely brows for empire form'd,
Place Afric's nobleſt crown—A wretched gift
To what my love would give!
Soph. What? marry thee?
This night?
Maſ. Thou dear one! yes, this very night
Let injur'd Hymen have his rights reſtor'd,
And bind our broken vows.--Think, ſerious, think!
On what I plead.--A thouſand reaſons urge.—
Captivity diſſolves thy former marriage;
And if the meaneſt vulgar thus are freed,

Can

Can Sophoniſba to a ſlave, to Syphax,
The moſt exalted of her ſex, be bound?
Beſides, it is the beſt, perhaps, ſole way,
To ſave thee from the Romans; and muſt ſure
Bar their pretenſions: or, if ruin comes,
To periſh with thee, is to periſh happy.
Soph. Yet muſt I ſtill inſiſt—
Maſ. It ſhall be ſo.
I know thy purpoſe; it would plead for Syphax.
He ſhall have all, thou deareſt! ſhall have all,
Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,
But thee, thou more than all!
Soph. Bear witneſs, heaven; [*Aſide.*
This is alone for Carthage. [*To him.*
Gain'd by goodneſs
I may be thine. Expect no love, no ſighing.
Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again
To hold thee dear. If on theſe terms thou canſt,
Here take me, take me, to thy wiſhes
Maſ. Yes,
Yes, Sophoniſba! as a wretch takes life
From off the rack.—All wild with frantic joy,
Thus hold thee, preſs thee, to my bounding heart;
And bleſs the bounteous gods.—Can heaven give more?
Oh happy! happy! happy!—Come, my fair,
This ready minute ſees thy will perform'd;
From Syphax knocks his chains; and I myſelf,
Even in his favour, will requeſt the Romans.

Oh, thou haſt ſmil'd my paſſions into peace!
[illegible] while conflicting winds embroil'd the ſeas,
[illegible] Bloom, warm with immortal blood,
[illegible] Venus reſt'd her o'er the raging flood;
She ſmil'd around, like thine her beauties glow'd;
When ſmooth, in gentle ſwells, the ſurges flow'd;
Sunk, by degrees, into a liquid plain;
And one bright calm ſat trembling on the main.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Phœn. HAIL queen of Maſæſylia once again
And fair Maſſylia join'd! This riſing day
Saw Sophoniſba, from the height of life,
Thrown to the very brink of ſlavery;
State, honours, armies vaniſh'd; nothing left
But her own great unconquerable mind.
And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power
Reſtor'd I ſee my royal friend, and kneel
In grateful homage to the gods, and her.
Ye powers, what awful changes often mark
The fortunes of the great!

Soph. Phœniſſa, true;
'Tis awful all, the wond'rous work of fate.
But, ah, this ſudden marriage damps my ſoul!
I like it not, that wild precipitance
Of youth, that ardour that impetuous ſtream
In which his love return'd. At firſt, my friend,
He vainly ſtrug'd with diſappointed love;
And, as the haſty ſtorm ſubſided, then
To ſoftneſs varied, to returning fondneſs,

To fighs, to tears, to ſupplicating vows:
But all his vows were idle, till at laſt
He ſhook my heart by Rome.---To be his queen
Could only ſave me from their horrid power.
And there is madneſs in that thought, enough,
In that ſtrong thought alone, to make me run
From nature.

Phœn. Was it not auſpicious, madam?
Juſt as we hop'd? juſt as our wiſhes plan'd?
Nor let your ſpirit ſink. Your ſerious hours,
When you behold the Roman ravage check'd,
From their enchantment Maſiniſſa freed,
And Carthage miſtreſs of the world again,
This marriage will approve: then will it riſe
In all its glory, virtuous, wiſe, and great,
While happy nations, then deliver'd, join
Their loud acclaim. And, had the bleſt occaſion
Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes?
Your liberty? your country? where your all?
Think well of this; you cannot but exult
In what is done.

Soph. So may my hopes ſucceed,
As love alone to Carthage, to the public,
Led me a marriage-victim to the temple,
And juſtifies my vows!---Ha! Syphax here!
What would his rage with me? Phœniſſa, fly.
But this one trial more---Heroic truth,
Support me now!

SCENE

SCENE II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Syph. You ſeem to fly me, madam,
To ſhun my gratulations.--Here I come,
To join the general joy; and I, ſure I,
Who have to dotage, have to ruin lov'd you,
Muſt take a tender part in your ſucceſs,
In your recover'd ſtate.

Soph. 'Tis very well.
I thank you, ſir.

Syph. And gentle Maſiniſſa,
Say, will he prove a very coming fool?
All pliant, all devoted to your will?
A duteous wretch like Syphax?--Ha! not mov'd,
Speak, thou perfidious! canſt thou bear it thus?
With ſuch a ſteady countenance? canſt thou
Here ſee the man thou haſt ſo groſsly wrong'd,
And yet not ſink in ſhame? and yet not ſhake
In every guilty nerve?

Soph. What have I done,
That I ſhould tremble? that I ſhould not dare
To [illegible] thy preſence? Was my heart to blame,
I'd tremble at myſelf, and not at thee:
Proud man! Nor would I live to be aſham'd.
For of all evils, in the generous, ſhame
Is the moſt [illegible]ang.--But you behold
My late engagement with a jealous, falſe,
And ſelfiſh eye.

Syph.

Syph. Avenging Juno hear!
And canſt thou think to juſtify thyſelf?
I bluſh to hear thee, traitreſs!
Soph. O my ſoul!
Canſt thou hear this, this baſe opprobious language,
And yet be tamely calm?---Well, for his once
It ſhall be ſo--in pity to thy madneſs--
Impatient ſpirit down!--Yes, Syphax, yes,
Yes I will greatly juſtify myſelf;
Even by the conſort of the thundering Jove,
Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judg'd.
And every generous heart, not meanly loſt
In little low purſuits, will ſure abſolve me.
But, in the tempeſt of the ſoul, when rage,
Loud indignation, unattentive pride,
And jealouſy confound it, how can then
The nobler, public ſentiments be heard!
Yet let me tell thee--
Syph. Thou canſt tell me nought.
Away! away! nought but illuſion, falſehood--
Soph. My heart will burſt, in juſtice to myſelf,
If here I ſpeak not; tho' thy rage, I know,
Can never be convinc'd, yet ſhall it be
Confounded.--What! muſt I renounce my freedom!
Forego the power of doing general good?
Yield myſelf up the ſlave, the barbarous triumph
Of inſolent, enrag'd, inveterate Rome?
And all for nothing but to grace my fall?
Nay, ſingly periſh to retain the name,
The empty title of a captive's wife?
For thee; the Romans may be mild to thee:

But

But I, a Carthaginian, I, whose blood
Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs;
Who have myſelf much hurt them, and who live
Only to work them woe; what, what can I
Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs
Of the worſt fate, the bitterneſs of bondage?
Yet thou, kind man, thou, in thy generous love,
Wouldſt have me ſuffer that; be bound to thee,
For that dire end alone, beyond the ſtretch
Of nature, and of law.

Syph. Confuſion! Law!
I know the laws permit thee, the groſs laws
That rule the vulgar. I'm a captive, true:
And therefore may'ſt thou plead a ſhameful right
To leave me to my chains---But ſay, thou baſe one!
Ungrateful! ſay, for whom am I a captive?
For whom has battle after battle bled?
For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,
Been vilely caſt away? For one, ye gods!
Who leaves me for the victor, for the foe
I hold in utter endleſs deteſtation.
Fire! fury! hell!---Oh I am richly paid!
But this it is to love a Woman---Woman!
The ſource of all diſaſter, all perdition!
Man in himſelf is ſecure, would be happy,
Too happy, but the gods, to keep him wretched,
Curs'd him with woman! fond, enchanting, ſmooth,
And ſeeming-ſeeming woman; but, at heart,
All [illegible], ſerpents, tigers, furies, all
That [illegible] in one breaſt combin'd,
And gilded o'er with beauty!

Soph.

Soph. Hapleſs man!
I pity thee; this madneſs only fires
My boſom to compaſſion, not to rage.
Think as you pleaſe of our unhappy ſex,
Too much ſubjected to your tyrant force;
Yet know that all, we were not all at leaſt,
Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours.
Our paſſions too can ſometimes ſoar above
The houſehold taſk aſſign'd us, can extend
Beyond the narrow ſphere of families,
And take great ſtates into th' expanded heart,
As well as yours, ye partial to yourſelves!
And this is my ſupport, my joy, my glory;
On theſe great principles, and theſe alone,
I ſtill direct my conduct.

Syph. Falſe as hell!
I loath your ſex! when it pretends to virtue,
You talk of honour, conſcience, patriotiſm!
A female patriot!--Vanity!--Abſurd!
Even doating dull credulity would laugh
To hear you prate. Did ever woman yet
Form any better purpoſe in her thought,
Than how to pleaſe her pride or wanton will?
Thoſe are the principles on which you act,
Yes, thoſe alone.

Soph. Muſt I then, muſt I, Syphax,
Give thee a bitter proof of what I ſay?
I would not ſeem to heighten thy diſtreſs
Not in the leaſt inſult thee. Thy art [illegible]
So fate ſevere has will'd it, falle[illegible] by
I therefore have been p[illegible]ient: from a[illegible] her

Such

Such language, such indignity, had fir'd
My soul to madness. But since driven to far,
I must remind thy blind injurious rage
Of our unhappy marriage.—
Syph. Dar'st thou name it,
After such perfidy?
Soph. Allow me, Syphax,
Hear me but once! If what I here declare
Shines not with reason, and the cleareſt truth;
May I be baſe, deſpis'd, and dumb for ever!
I pray thee think, when unpropitious Hymen
Our hands united, how I ſtood engag'd;
Was I not blooming in the pride of youth,
And youthful hopes; ſunk in a paſſion too,
Which few reſign? yet then I married thee,
Becauſe to Carthage deem'd a ſtronger friend;
For that alone. On theſe conditions, ſay,
Didſt thou not take me, court me to thy throne?
Have I deceiv'd thee ſince? Have I diſſembled?
To gain one purpoſe, e'er pretended what
I never felt? Thou canſt not ſay I have.
And if that principle, which then inſpir'd
My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now
Be wrong: Nay, ſince my native city wants
Aſſiſtance more, and calling calls for aid,
'Tis ſtill more right—
Syph. Thy reaſoning is infidelity!
Soph. I'm ſorry that thou doſt oblige me to it.
Then hear, and ſee my full-open'd ſoul.
All love, but that of Carthage, I deſpiſe.
I formerly [illegible] Maſiniſſa thee

Prefer [illegible] not, nor to thee now Maſiniſſa,
But [illegible]ge to you both. And if preferring
Thouſands to one, a whole collected people,
All nature's tenderneſs, whate'er is ſacred,
The liberty, the welfare of a ſtate,
To one man's frantic happineſs, be ſhame;
Here, Syphax, I invoke it on my head!
This ſet aſide; I, careleſs of myſelf,
And, ſcorning proſperous ſtate, had ſtill been thine,
In all the depth of miſery proudly thine!
But ſince the public good, the law ſupreme,
Forbids it; I will leave thee with a kingdom,
The ſame I found thee, or not reign myſelf.
Alas! I ſee thee hurt--Why cam'ſt thou here,
Thus to inflame thee more?
Syph. Why, ſorcereſs? why?
Thou complication of all deadly miſchief!
Thou lying, ſoothing, ſpecious, charming fury!
I'll tell thee why—To breathe my great revenge
To throw this load of burning madneſs from me;
To ſtab thee!———.
Soph. Ha!
Syph. —And, ſpringing from thy heart,
To quench me with thy blood!
Phœniſſa interpoſes
Soph. Off, give me way!
Phœniſſa; tempt [illegible] th[illegible] his brutal rage.
Me, me, he dares not murder: if he does,
Here let his fury ſtrike; for I [illegible]re die.
What holds thy trembling hand?
Phœn. Guards!

Soph.

Soph. Seize the king.
But look you treat him well, with all the ſtate
His dignity demands.
Syph. That care from thee
Is worſe than death.—The Roman trumpets!—Ha!
Now I bethink me, Rome will do me juſtice.
Yes, I ſhall ſee thee walk the ſlave of Rome,
Forget my wrongs, and glut me with the ſight.
Be that my beſt revenge.
Soph. Inhuman! that,
If there is death in Afric, ſhall not be.

SCENE III.

LÆLIUS, SYPHAX.

Læl. Syphax! alas, how fallen! how chang'd! from what
I here beheld thee once in pomp, and ſplendor,
At that illuſtrious interview, when Rome
And Carthage met beneath this very roof,
Their two great generals, Aſdrubal and Scipio,
To court thy friendſhip. Of the ſame repaſt
Both gracefully partook, and both reclin'd
On the ſame couch: for perſonal diſtaſte
And hatred ſeldom harbour between the brave.
Then the ſuperior virtues of the Roman
Gain'd all my heart. Even Aſdrubal himſelf,
With admiration ſtruck, and juſt deſpair,
Own'd him as powerful at the ſocial feaſt

As in the battle. This thou may'ſt remember,
And how thy faith was given before the gods,
And ſworn and ſeal'd to Scipio; yet how falſe
Thou ſince haſt prov'd, I need not now recount:
But let thy ſufferings for thy guilt atone,
The captive for the king. A Roman tongue
Scorns to purſue the triumph of the ſword
With mean upbraidings.

Syph. Lælius, 'tis too true.
Curſe on the cauſe!

Læl. But where is Maſiniſſa?
The brave young victor, the Numidian Roman?
Where is he? that my joy, my glad applauſe,
From envy pure, may hail his happy ſtate.
Why that contemptuous ſmile?

Syph. Too credulous Roman!
I ſmile to think how this brave Maſiniſſa,
This ſtome-devoted hero, muſt ſtill more
Attract thy praiſes, by a late exploit,
In every thing ſucceſsful.

Læl. What is this?
Theſe public ſignals! A ſtrange unuſual joy
O'er all the native city blazes wide.
What wanton riot reigns to-night in Carthe,
Within theſe conquer'd walls?

Syph. This, Lælius, is
A night of triumph o'er the conqueror,
O'er Maſiniſſa.

Læl. Maſiniſſa! How?

Syph. Why he to-night is married to my queen.

Læl. Impoſſible!—

Syph.

Syph. Yes, ſhe, the fury! ſhe,
Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,
That ſet my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,
All in a blaze; ſhe now has ſeiz'd on him,
Will turn him ſoon from Rome—I know her power,
Her lips diſtil unconquerable poiſon.
O glorious thought! her arts, her fatal love
Will cruſh him deep, beneath the mighty ruins
Of falling Carthage.

Læl. Can it be? Amazement!

Syph. Nay learn it from himſelf.—He comes—Away!
Ye furies ſnatch me from his ſight! For hell,
Its tortures all are gentle to the preſence
Of a triumphant rival?

Læl. What is man?

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, LÆLIUS.

Maſ. Thou more than partner of this glorious day,
Which has [illegible] Carthage torn her chief ſupport,
And tottering left her. I rejoice to ſee thee—
To Cirtha welcome, [illegible].—Thy brave legions
Now taſte the ſweet repoſe to valour purchas'd:
This city pours refreſhment on their toils.
I order'd Narva—

Læ. Thanks to Maſiniſſa.

All that is well.—But I obſerv'd the king
More looſely guarded than beſits the ſtate
Of ſuch a captive. True, indeed, from him
There is not much to fear. The dangerous ſpirit
Is his imperious queen, his Sophoniſba.
The pride, the rage of Carthage live in her.
How? where is ſhe?
Maſ. She, Lælius? is my care.
Think not of her. I'll anſwer for her conduct.
Læl. Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me, prince,
It were as ſafe to anſwer for the winds,
That their loos'd fury will not rouſe the waves,
Or that the darted lightning will be harmleſs,
As promiſe peace from her.—But why ſo dark?
You ſhift your place, your countenance grows warm.
It is not uſual this in Maſiniſſa.
Pray what offence can aſking for the queen,
The Roman captive, give?
Maſ. Lælius, no more.
You know my marriage.—Syphax has been buſy—
It is unkind to dally with my paſſion.
Læl. Ah, Maſiniſſa! was it then for this,
Thy hurry hither from the recent battle?
Is the firſt inſtance of the Roman bounty
Thus, thus abus'd? They have thee back thy kingdom;
And in return are of their captive rob'd;
Of all they valued, Sophoniſba.—
Maſ. Robb'd!

How

How, Lælius? Robb'd!
Læl. Yes, Maſiniſſa, robb'd.
What is it elſe? But I, this very night,
Will here aſſert the majeſty of Rome,
And, mark me, tear her from the nuptial bed.
Maſ. Oh Gods! oh patience! as ſoon, fiery Roman!
As ſoon thy rage might from her azure ſphere
Tear yonder moon.--The man who ſeizes her,
Shall ſet his foot firſt on my bleeding heart.
Of that be ſure.--And is it thus you treat
Your firm allies? Thus kings in friendſhip with you?
Of human paſſions ſtrip them?--Slaves indeed:
If thus deny'd the common privilege
Of nature, what the weakeſt creatures claim,
A right to what they love.
Læl. Out! out!--For ſhame!
This paſſion makes thee blind. Here is a war,
Which deſolates the nations, has almoſt
Laid waſte the world. How many widows, orphans,
And tender virgins, weep its rage in Rome!
Even her great ſenate droops; her nobles fail;
Nature herſelf, by frequent prodigies,
Seems at this havock of her works to ſicken:
And our Auſonian plains are now become
A horror to the ſight. At each ſad ſtep,
Remembrance weeps. Yet her, the greateſt prize
It hither has yielded; her, whoſe charms
Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point;
Then to thy wedded breaſt haſt wildly taken,

Hast purchas'd thee her beauties by the blood
Of thy protecting friends? and on a throne
Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.
Canst thou do this, and call thyself a king
Ally'd to Rome? Rash youth, the Roman people,
To kings, who dare offend them thus, vouchsafe not
The honour of their friendship.--Thou hast thrown
That glory from thee, and must now be taught
To dread their wrath.

Maſ. Be not ſo haughty, Lælius.
It ſcarce becomes the gentle Scipio's friend;
Suits not thy character, the tender manners
I ſtill have mark'd in thee. I honour Rome;
But honour too myſelf, my vows, my queen:
Nor will, nor can I tamely hear thee threaten
To ſeize her like a ſlave.

Læl. I will be calm.
This thy raſh deed, this unexpected ſhock,
Such a peculiar injury to me,
Thy friend and fellow-ſoldier, has perhaps
Snatch'd me too far. For haſt thou not diſhonour'd,
By this laſt action, a ſucceſsful war,
Our common charge, truſted to us by Scipio?

Maſ. Our charge from Scipio was to conquer Syphax,
Not by a barbarous triumph to inſult
His beauteous queen. Was Sophoniſba made,
To follow weeping a proud victor's chariot,
She, the firſt miſtreſs of my heart, who ſtill

I gave

Reigns in my ſoul, and there will reign for ever.
At ſuch a ſight, the warrior's eye might wet
His burning cheek; and all the Roman matrons,
Who lin'd the laurel'd way, aſham'd, and ſad,
Turn from a captive brighter than themſelves.
But Scipio will be milder.

Læl. I diſdain
This thy ſurmiſe, and give it up to Scipio
Theſe paſſions are not comely.--Here to-morrow
Comes the proconſul. Mean-time, Maſiniſſa,
Ah, harden not thyſelf in flattering hope!
Scipio is mild, but ſteady.--Ha! the queen.
I think ſhe hates a Roman--and will leave thee.

SCENE V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

Soph. Was not that Roman Lælius, as I enter'd,
Who parted gloomy hence?

Maſ. Madam, the ſame.

Soph. Unhappy Afric! ſince theſe haughty Romans
Have in this lordly manner trod thy courts.
I read his freſh reproaches in thy face;
The leſſon'd pupil in thy fallen look,
In that forc'd ſmile, which ſickens on thy cheek.

Maſ. Oh ſay not ſo, thou rapture of my ſoul!
For while I fondly gaze upon thy charms,
I ſmile as joyous as the ſun in May;

Nor

Nor ever my heart, by thee poſſeſt, retain
One painful thought.
Soph. Nay, tell me, Maſiniſſa;
How feels their tyranny, when 'tis brought home?
When, lawleſs grown, it touches what is dear?
Pomp for a while may dazzle thoughtleſs man,
Falſe glory blind him; but there is a time,
When even the ſlave in heart will ſpurn his chains,
Nor know ſubmiſſion more—What ſaid thy tyrant?
Maſ. His diſappointment for a moment only
Burſt in vain paſſion, and—
Soph. You ſtood abaſh'd;
You bore his threats, and tamely-ſilent, heard him,
Heard the fierce Roman mark me for his triumph.
Oh meanneſs!
Maſ. Baniſh that unkind ſuſpicion.
The thought enflam'd my ſoul. I vow'd my life,
My laſt Maſſylian to the ſword, ere he
Should touch thy freedom with the leaſt diſhonour.
But that from Scipio—
Soph. Scipio!
Maſ. That from him—
Soph. I tell thee, Maſiniſſa, if from him
You gain my freedom, from myſelf conceal it.
I ſhall diſdain ſuch freedom.
Maſ. Sophoniſba!
Thou all my heart holds precious! doubt no more.
Nor Rome, nor Scipio, nor a world combin'd,
Shall tear thee from me; till outſtretch'd I lie,
A nameleſs corpſe!
Soph. If thy protection fails,

Of this at leaſt be ſure, be very ſure,
To give me timely death.
Maſ. Ceaſe thus to talk,
Of death, of Romans, of unkind ambition.
My ſofter thoughts thoſe rugged themes refuſe,
And turn alone to love.—All, all, but thee,
All nature is a paſſing dream to me.
Fix'd in my view, thou doſt for ever ſhine,
Thy form forth-beaming from the ſoul divine.
A ſpirit thine, which mortals might adore;
Deſpiſing love, and thence creating more.
Thou the high paſſions, I the tender prove,
Thy heart was form'd for glory, mine for love.

The End of the fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

Maſ. HAIL to the joyous day! With purple clouds
The whole horizon glows. The breezy Spring
Stands looſely floating on the mountain-top,
And deals her ſweets around. The ſun too ſeems,
As conſcious of my joy, with brighter beams
To gild the happy world; and all things ſmile
Like Sophoniſba. Love and friendſhip ſure
Have mark'd this day with all their choiceſt bleſſings;
Oh! Sophoniſba's mine! and Scipio comes!

Narv. My lord, the trumpets ſpeak his near approach.
I want his ſecret audience--Leave us, Narva.

SCENE II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

Maſ. Scipio! more welcome than any tongue can ſpeak!
Oh greatly, dearly welcome!

Scip.

Scip. Maſiniſſa!
My heart beats back thy joy.—A happy friend,
Rais'd by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,
O'er all his foes; and on his native throne,
Amidſt his reſcu'd ſhouting ſubjects, ſet.
Say, can the gods, in laviſh bounty, give
A ſight more pleaſing?

Maſ. My great friend! and patron!
It was thy timely, thy reſtoring aid
That brought me from the fearful deſert-life,
To live again in ſtate, and purple ſplendor.
Thy friendſhip arm'd me with the ſtrength of Rome;
And, now I wield the ſceptre of my fathers,
See my dear people from the tyrant's ſcourge,
From Syphax freed; I hear their glad applauſes;
And, to complete my happineſs, have gain'd
A friend worth all. O gratitude, eſteem,
And love like mine, with what divine delight
Ye fill the heart!

Scip. Heroic youth! thy virtue
Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can beſtow.
It was thy patience, Maſiniſſa, patience,
A champion clad in ſteel, that in the waſte
Attended ſtill thy ſtep, and ſav'd my friend
For better days. What cannot patience do!
A great deſign ſeldom ſnatch'd at once;
'Tis patient [illegible] it on. From ſavage nature,
'Tis patience [illegible] has built up human life,
Th[illegible] of arts! and Rome e[illegible] her head
An everlaſting monument of patience.

Maſ. I have that, or any other virtue, Scipio,
'Tis

'Tis copy'd all from thee.
Scip. No, Masinissa,
'Tis all unborrow'd, the spontaneous growth
Of nature in thy breast.—Friendship for once,
Must, tho' thou blushest, wear a liberal tongue;
Must tell thee, noble youth, that long experience
In councils, battles, many a hard event,
Has found thee still so constant, so sincere,
So wise, so brave, so generous, so humane,
So well attemper'd, and so fitly turn'd
For what is either great or good in life,
As casts distinguish'd honour on thy country,
And cannot but endear thee to the Romans.
For me, I think my labours all repaid,
My wars in Afric. Masinissa's friendship
Rewards them all. Be that my dearest triumph
To have assisted thy forlorn estate,
And lent a happy hand in raising thee
To thy paternal throne, usurp'd by Syphax.
The greatest service could be done my country,
Distracted Afric, and mankind in general,
Was thus to aid my worth. To put the power
Of sovereign rule into the good man's hand,
Is giving peace and happiness to millions.
But has my friend, since late we paused armies,
Since he with Lælius acted such a brave,
Auspicious part against the common foe;
Has he been blameless quite? has he consider'd,
How pleasure often on the youthful heart,
Beneath the rude soft disguise of love,
(All sweetness, smiles, and seeming innocence)
Steals unperceiv'd, and lays the victor low?

I would not, cannot put thee to the pain—
—It pains me deeper—of the least reproach.—
Let thy too faithful memory ſupply
The reſt. [*Pauſing.*
Thy ſilence that dejected look,
That honeſt colour flushing o'er thy cheek,
Impart thy better ſoul.
Maſ. Oh my good lord!
Oh Scipio! Love has ſeiz'd me, tyrant love
Inthrals my ſoul. I am undone by love!
Scip. And art thou then to ruin reconcil'd?
Tam'd to deſtruction! wilt thou be undone?
Reſign the towering thought? the vaſt deſign,
With future glories big? the warrior's wreathe?
The praiſe of ſenates? an applauding world?
All for a ſigh? all for a ſoft embrace?
For a gay tranſient fancy, Maſiniſſa?
For ſhame, my friend! for honour's ſake, for vir-
tue's!
Sit not with folded arms, deſpairing, weak,
Like a ſick virgin ſighing to the gale,
Till ſure deſtruction comes—Alas, he's ſnatch'd
From him, the man I lov'd!
Maſ. How chang'd indeed!
The time has been, when, fir'd from Scipio's
tongue,
My ſoul has panted in a flame with his.—
Where is all that flown? How leſs attempt!
Can love like mine be quell'd? Can I forget
What ſtill poſſeſſes, charms my thoughts for ever?
Threw ſacrilegious me what I hold moſt dear?

Not feel the force of excellence? To joy
Be dead? And undelighted with delight?
Hold, let me think a moment--no! no! no!
I am unequal to thy virtue, Scipio!

Scip. Fie, Maſiniſſa, fie! By heavens! I bluſh
At thy dejection, this degenerate language,
What! periſh for a woman! Ruin all,
All the fair deeds which an admiring world
Hopes from thy riper years; only to ſooth
A ſtubborn fancy, a luxurious will?
How muſt it, think you, ſound in future ſtory?
Young Maſiniſſa was a virtuous prince,
And Afric ſmil'd beneath his early ray;
But that a Carthaginian captive came,
By whom untimely in the common fate
Of love he fell. The wife will ſcorn the page,
And all thy praiſe be ſome fond maid exclaiming,
Where are thoſe lovers now? O rather, rather,
Had I ne'er ſeen the vital light of heaven,
Than take the vulgar life, and like them die!
Ambition ſickens at the very thought.
To puff, and buſtle here from day to day,
Loſt in the paſſions of inglorious life,
Joys which the careleſs brutes are leſs above us:
And when ſome years, each duller than another,
Are thus claps'd, in nauſeous pangs to die;
And paſs away, like thoſe forgotten things,
That ſoon become as they had never been.

Maſ. And am I dead to this?

Scip. The gods, my friend,
Who train up heroes in misfortune's ſchool,

Have

Have ſhook thee with adverſity, with each
Illuſtrious evil, that can raiſe, expand,
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth
Has ſtood theſe wint'ry blaſts, grown ſtronger by them.
Shall then in proſperous times, while all is mild,
All vernal, fair; and glory blows around thee;
Shall then the dead Serene of pleaſure come,
And lay thy faded honours in the duſt?

Maſ. O gentle Scipio! ſpare me, ſpare my weakneſs.

Scip. Remember Hannibal--A ſignal proof,
A freſh example of deſtructive pleaſure.
He was the dread of nations, once of Rome!
When from Bellona's boſom, nurs'd in camps,
And hard with toil, he down the rugged Alps
Ruſh'd like a torrent over Italy;
Unconquer'd, till the looſe delights of Capua
Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,
Perfum'd, and made a lover of the hero.
Lo! now he droops in Bruttium, fear'd no more.
Remember him; and yet reſume thy ſpirit,
Ere it be quite diſſolv'd.

Maſ. Shall Scipio ſtoop,
Thus to regard, approach me with diſdain;
And yet a ſtupid anguiſh at my heart
Repel what he can ſay?--But why, my friend,
Why ſhould we fear the beſt of paſſions, love?
It adds the hero, bids ambition riſe
To nobler heights, inſpires immortal deeds,
Elevates the ſoul, and adds a grace to virtue.

Scip.

Scip. There is a holy tenderneſs indeed,
A virtuous, ſocial, ſympathetic love,
That binds, ſupports, and ſweetens human life.
But is thy paſſion ſuch? Liſt, Maſiniſſa,
While I the hardeſt office of a friend
Diſcharge; and, with a neceſſary hand,
A hand, tho' harſh at preſent, truly tender,
I paint this paſſion. And if then thou ſtill
Art bent to ſooth it, I muſt ſighing leave thee,
To what the gods think fit.

Maſ. O never Scipio!
O never leave me to myſelf! Speak on.
I dread, and yet deſire thy friendly hand.

Scip. I hope that Maſiniſſa needs not now
Be told, how much his happineſs is mine;
With what a warm benevolence I'd ſpring
To raiſe, confirm it, to prevent his wiſhes
In every right purſuit!—But while he rages,
Burns in a fever, ſhall I let him quaff
Delicious poiſon for a cooling draught,
In fooliſh pity to his thirſt? ſhall I
Let a ſwift flame conſume him as he ſleeps,
Becauſe his dreams are gay? ſhall I indulge
A frenzy ſtealing from an infectious eye,
A ſudden impulſe unapprov'd by reaſon?
Nay, by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd!
Reſolv'd againſt it?—A paſſion for a woman,
Who has abus'd thee baſely? left thy youth,
Thy love as ſweet, as tender as the ſpring,
The blooming hero for the hoary tyrant?
And now who makes thy ſhelt'ring arm alone

Her laſt retreat, to ſave her from the vengeance,
Which even her very perfidy to thee
Has brought upon her head?—Nor is this all.—
A woman who will ply her deepeſt arts,
(Ah too prevailing, as appears already)
Will never reſt till Syphax's fate is thine;
Till friendſhip weeping flies, we join no more
In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from Rome?
I could add too, that there is ſomething cruel,
Inhuman in thy paſſion. Does not Syphax,
While thou rejoiceſt, die? The generous heart
Should ſcorn a pleaſure which gives others pain.
If this, my friend, all this conſider'd deep,
Alarm thee not, nor rouze thy reſolution,
And call the hero from his wanton ſlumber,
Then Maſiniſſa's loſt.

Maſ. Oh, I am pierc'd!
In every thought am pierc'd! 'Tis all too true.—
I would, but can't deny it.—Whither, whither,
Thro' what inchanted wilds have I been wandering?
They ſeem'd Elyſium, the delightful plains,
The happy groves of heroes and of lovers:
But the divinity that breathes in thee
Has broke the chafm, and I am in a deſert,
Far from the land of peace. It was but lately
That a pure joyous calm o'erſpread my ſoul,
And reaſon rul'd my paſſions into bliſs;
When love came hurrying in, and with raſh hand
Mix'd them, furious, till they now ferment
To miſery.—There is no reaſoning down
This deep, deep anguiſh! this continual pang!

A thousand things! whene'er my rapture'd thought
Turns back a little—But I will not think.—
And yet I must.—Oh Gods! that I could lose
What a few hours have on my memory grav'd,
In adamant.

Scip. But one strong effort more,
And the fair field is thine—A conquest far
Excelling that o'er Syphax. What remains,
Since now thy madness to thyself appears,
But an immediate manly resolution,
To shake off this effeminate disease;
These soft ideas, which seduce thy soul,
Make it all idle, weak, inglorious, wild,
A scene of dreams; to give them to the winds,
And be my former friend, thy self again?
I joy to find thee touch'd by generous motives,
And that I need not bid thee recollect,
Whose awful property thou hast usurp'd;
Need not assure thee, that the Roman people,
The senators of Rome, will never suffer
A dangerous woman, their devoted foe,
A woman, whose irrefragable spirit
Has in great part, sustain'd this bloody war,
Whose charms corrupted Syphax from their side,
To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breast,
And kindle future war. No, fate itself
Is not more steady to the right than they.
And, where the public good but seems concern'd,
No motive their impenetrable hearts
Nor fear nor tenderness can touch: Such is
The spirit that has rais'd Imperial Rome.

Masi.

Maſ. Ah killing truth!—But I have promis'd, Scipio!
Have ſworn, to ſave her from the Roman power.
My plighted faith is paſs'd, my hand is given
And, by the conſcious gods! who mark'd my vows,
The whole united world ſhall never have her.
For I will die a thouſand thouſand deaths,
With all Maſſylia in one field expire;
Ere to the loweſt wretch, much leſs to her
I love, to Sophoniſba, to my queen,
I violate my word.

Scip. My heart approves
Thy reſolution, thy determin'd honour.
For ever ſacred be thy word, and oath.
But, thus divided, how to keep thy faith
At once to Rome and Sophoniſba; how
To ſave her from our chains, and yet thyſelf
From greater bondage; this thy ſecret thought
Can beſt inform thee.

Maſ. Agony! Diſtraction!
Theſe wilful tears!—O look not on me, Scipio!
For I'm a child again.

Scip. Thy tears are no reproach.
Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.
The cruel cannot weep. Lo! Friendſhip's eye
Gives thee the drop it would refuſe itſelf.
I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve
About thy heart, thus to tear off thy paſſion.
But for [illegible] reaſon, Maſiniſſa,
'Tis hop'd from thee. The harder, thence reſults
The greater glory.—Why ſhould we pretend

To

To conquer nations, and to rule mankind,
Pre-eminent in glory, place, and power,
While slaves at heart? while by fantastic turns
Our frantic passions reign? This very thought,
Should turn our pomp to shame, disgrace our triumphs;
And, when the shouts of millions rend our ears,
Whisper reproach.—O ye celestial powers!
What is it, in a torrent of success,
To overflow the world; if by the stream
Our own enfeebled minds are born away
From reason and from virtue? Real glory
Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves;
And without that the conqueror is nought
But the first slave.—Then rouse thee, Masiniſſa!
Nor in one weakness all thy virtues lose;
And, oh, beware of long, of vain repentance!

Mas. Well! well! no more.—It is but dying too!

SCENE III.

SCIPIO, *alone.*

I wish I have not urg'd the truth to rigour!
There is a time when virtue grows severe,
Too much for nature, and almost even cruel.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

SCIPIO, LÆLIUS.

Scip. Poor Maſiniſſa, Lælius, is undone;
Betwixt his paſſion, and his reaſon toſt
In miſerable conflict.

Læl. Entering, Scipio,
He ſhot athwart me, nor vouchſaf'd one look.
Hung on his clouded brow I mark'd deſpair,
And his eye glaring with ſome dire reſolve.
Faſt o'er his cheek too ran the haſty tear.
It were great pity that he ſhould be loſt.

Scip. By heavens! to loſe him were a ſhock, as if
I loſt thee, Lælius, loſt my deareſt brother.
Bound up in friendſhip from our infant years,
A thouſand lovely qualities endear him,
Only too warm of heart.

Læl. What ſhall be done?

Scip. Here let it reſt, till time abates his paſſion.
Nature is nature, Lælius, let the Wife
Say what they pleaſe. But now perhaps he dies.—
Haſte! haſte! and give him hope.—I have not time
To tell thee what.—Thy prudence will direct—
Whatever is conſiſtent with my honour,
My duty to the publick, and my friendſhip
To him himſelf, ſay, promiſe, ſhall be done.
I hope returning reaſon will prevent
Our farther care.

Læl.

Lel. I fly with joy.
Scip. His life
Not only ſave, but Sophoniſba's too:
For both, I fear, are in this paſſion mixt.
Lel. It ſhall be done.

SCENE V.

SCIPIO, *alone.*

If friendſhip ſuffers thus;
When love pours in his added violence,
What are the pangs which Maſiniſſa feels!

SCENE VI.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. Yes, Maſiniſſa loves me--Heavens! how fond!
But yet I know not what hangs on my ſpirit,
A diſmal boding; for this fatal Scipio,
I dread his virtues: this prevailing Roman,
Ev'n now, perhaps, deludes the generous king,
Fires his ambition with miſtaken glory,
Demands me from him; for full well he knows,
That, while I live, I muſt intend their ruin.
Phœn. Madam, theſe fears--
Soph. And yet it cannot be.
Can Scipio, whom even hoſtile fame proclaims
Of perfect honour, and of poliſh'd manners,

Smooth

Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wife,
Make ſuch a wild demand? Or, if he could,
Can Maſiniſſa grant it? give his queen,
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,
Yield her a captive to triumphant Rome?
'Tis baſeneſs to ſuſpect it; 'tis inhuman.
What then remains?—Suppoſe they ſhould reſolve,
By right of war, to ſeize me for their prize—
Ay, there it kills!—What can his ſingle arm
Againſt the Roman power? that very power
By which he ſtands reſtor'd? Diſtracting thought!
Still o'er my head the rod of bondage hangs.
Shame on my weakneſs.--This poor catching hope,
This tranſient taſte of joy--will only more
Imbitter death.
Phœn. A moment will decide.
Madam, till then--
Soph. Would I had dy'd before!
And am I dreaming here? Here! from the Romans
Beſeeching I may live to ſwell their triumph?
When my free ſpirit ſhould ere now have join'd
That great aſſembly, thoſe devoted ſhades,
Who ſcorn'd to live till liberty was loſt,
But ere their country fell, abhorr'd the light.
Whence this pale ſlave? he trembles with his meſſage.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA; *and to them a* SLAVE *with a letter and poison from* MASINISSA.

SLAVE, *kneeling.*

This, Madam, from the king, and this.

Soph. Ha!--Stay. [*Reads the letter.*

Rejoice, Phœnissa! Give me joy, my friend!
For here is liberty! my fears are vain.
The hand of Rome can never touch me more!
Hail! perfect freedom, hail!

Phœn. How? what? my queen!
Ah! what is this?

[*Pointing to the poison.*

Soph. The first of blessings, death.

Phœn. Alas, alas! can I rejoice in that?

Soph. Shift not thy colour at the sound of death;
For death appears not in a dreary light.
Seems not a blank to me, a loss of all
Those fond sensations, those enchanting dreams,
Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,
And form the whole of happiness they know.
It is to me perfection, glory, triumph,
Nay, fondly would I chuse it; tho' persuaded
It were a long dark night without a morning,
To bondage far prefer it! since it is
Deliverance from a world where Romans rule,
Where violence prevails,--And timely too--

Before my country falls; before I feel
As many ſtripes, as many [illegible]ns, and deaths,
As there are lives in Carthage.—Glorious charter!
By which I hold immortal life and freedom,
Come, let me read thee once again.—And then,
Obey the mandate.

[*Reads the letter aloud.*

MASINISSA to his QUEEN.

The Gods know with what pleaſure I would have kept my faith to Sophonisba in another manner. But ſince this fatal bowl alone can deliver thee from the Romans; call to mind thy father, thy country, that thou haſt been the wife of two kings; and act up to the dictates of thy own heart. I will not long ſurvive thee.

Oh, 'tis wondrous well!
Ye Gods of death who rule the Stygian gloom!
Ye who have greatly dy'd! I come! I come!
I die contented, ſince I die a Queen.
By Rome untouch'd, unſubdued by their power,
So much their terror, that I muſt not live.
And thou, go tell the King, if this is all
The nuptial preſent he can ſend his bride,
I thank him for it.—But, that death had worn
An eaſier face, before I truſted him.
Add, hither had he come, I could have taught
Him how to die.—I linger not, remember,
I ſtand no [illegible]ering on the brink of life;

 And,

And, but these vain drops, which grateful thus
Taking them from the poison.
To Jove the high Deliverer I shed,
Assure him that I drank it, drank it all,
With an unalter'd smile---And now [*Drinks.*

SCENE VIII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

Soph. My friend!
In tears, my friend! Dishonour not my death
With womanish complaints. Weep not for me,
Weep for thyself, Phœnissa, for thy country,
But not for me. There is a certain hour,
Which one would wish all undisturb'd and bright,
No care, no sorrow, no dejected passions;
And that is when we die, when hence we go,
Ne'er to be seen again; then let us spread
A bold exalted wing, and the last voice
We hear, be that of wonder and applause!
Phœn. Who with such virtue wishes not to die!
Soph. And is the sacred moment then so near?
The moment, when yon sun, those heavens, this earth,
Hateful to me, polluted by the Ro[illegible]
And all the busy slavish race of men,
Shall sink at once; and strait an[illegible] true,
New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
Rise on a sudden round: but thou, ye gods!

In

In clouds and horror wrap [illegible] none would ſtrive.
Oh to be there!----my b[illegible]lt begins to burn;
My tainted heart grow[illegible]ick.--Ah me! Phœniſſa,
How many virgins [illegible]nfants, tender wretches,
Muſt feel theſe pa[illegible]gs, ere Carthage is no more!
Soft, lead me [illegible] my couch--My ſhivering limbs,
Do this laſt offi[illegible]e, and then reſt for ever.
I pray thee w[illegible]ep not, pierce me not with groans.
The king too here---Nay then my death is full!

SCENE IX.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, MASINISSA, LÆLIUS, NARVA.

Maſ. Has Sophoniſba drank this curſed bowl?
O horror! horror! what a ſight is here!
Soph. Had I not drank it, Maſiniſſa, then
I had deſerv'd it.
Maſ. Exquiſite diſtreſs!
Oh bitter, bitter fate! and this laſt hope
Completes my woe.
Soph. When will theſe ears be deaf
To miſery's complaint? Theſe eyes be blind
To miſchief wrought by Rome?
Maſ. T[illegible] [illegible] too ſoon!--
Ah wh[illegible] [illegible]aſty? but a little while
Hadſt thou delay'd this horrid draught; I then
Had been as happy as I now am wretched!
Soph. What means this talk of hope? of coward waiting?

Maſ. What have I done? O heavens! I cannot think
On my raſh deed!--But while I talk, ſhe dies!
And how? what? where am I then?--Say, canſt thou
Forgive me, Sophoniſba?

Soph. Yes, and more;
More than forgive thee, thank thee, Maſiniſſa.
Hadſt thou been weak, and dally'd with my freedom,
'Till, by proud Rome enſlav'd, that injury
I never had forgiven.

Maſ. I came with life!
Lælius and I from Scipio haſted hither;
But death was here before us--this vile poiſon!

Soph. With life!--There was ſome merit in the poiſon;
But this deſtroys it all.--And couldſt thou think
Me mean enough to take it?--Oh! Phœniſſa,
This mortal toil is almoſt at an end.--
Receive my parting ſoul.

Phœn. Alas, my queen!

Maſ. Dies! dies! and ſcorns me!----Mercy!
Sophoniſba!
Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canſt;
Or death itſelf, the grave cannot relieve me:
But with the furies join'd, my frantic ghoſt
Will howl for ever.--Quivering! and pale!
Have I done this?

Soph. But for Rome
We might have been more happy.--I conjure thee
Be mild to Syphax; for my ſake regard him,
And let thy rage againſt him die with me.

Fare-

Farewell!--'Tis done! O[illegible]r, never, Carthage,
Shall I behold thee mo[illegible] [Dies.

Maſ. Dead! dead! oh dead!
Is there no death for me?
[*Snatches Lælius's ſword to ſtab himſelf.*

Læl. Hold, Maſiniſſa!

Maſ. And wouldſt thou make a coward of me, Lælius?
Have me ſurvive that murder'd excellence?
Did ſhe not ſtir? Ha! Who has ſhock'd my brain!
It whirls, it blazes.--Was it thou, old man?

Nar. Alas! alas! good Maſiniſſa, ſoftly!
Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

Maſ. The grave
Shall be my couch. Ye cannot make me live!
Ye ſtrive in vain!---Off!---crowd not thus around me!
For I will hear, ſee, think no more!--Thou ſun,
With-hold thy hated beams! And all I want
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave!
Ay, there ſhe lies!--Why to this pallid ſweetneſs
Can not I, Nature! lay my lips, and die!
[*Throws himſelf beſide her.*

Læl. See there the ruin[illegible] the noble mind
When from calm reaſon paſſion tears the ſway.
What pity ſhe ſhould [illegible]in!--Cruel war,
'Tis not the leaſt misfortune in thy train,
That of[illegible] thee the brave deſtroy the brave.
She had a Roman ſoul; [illegible] every one
Who loves, like her, his country, is a Roman.

Whether on Afric[illegible] sandy plains he glows,
Or lives untam'd among Riphæan snows,
If generous liberty the breast inflame,
The gloomy Lybian then deserves that name:
And, warm with freedom under frozen skies,
In farthest Britain Romans yet may rise.

The End of the fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mrs CIBBER.

NOW, I'm afraid, the modiſh taſte in vogue
Demands a ſtrong, high-ſeaſon'd epilogue:
Elſe might ſome ſilly ſoul take pity's part,
And odious virtue ſink into the heart.

Our ſqueamiſh author ſcruples, this proceeding;
He ſays it hurts ſound morals, and good breeding:
Nor Sophoniſba would he here produce,
A glaring model, of no private uſe.
Ladies, he bid me ſay, behold your Cato.
What tho' no Stoic ſhe, nor read in Plato?
Yet ſure ſhe ador'd, for her country's ſake,
A ſacrifice, which Cato could not make—
—Already, now, theſe wicked men are ſneering,
Some wreſting what one ſays, and others leering.
I vow they have not force for—public ſpirit,
That, ladies, muſt be your ſuperior merit.

Mercy forbid we ſhould lay down our lives;
Like theſe old, Punic, barbarous heathen wives.

Spare

Spare Christian blood.—That sure the devil's in her,
Who for her country would not lose a pinner.
—Lord! how could such a creature shew her face?
How?—Just as you do there—thro' Brussel's Lace.
The Roman fair, the public to distress,
Gave up the dearest ornaments of dress.
How much more cheaply might you gain applause?
—One yard of Ribband and two ells of Gauze.
And Gauze each deep-read critic must adore;
Your Roman ladies dress'd in Gauze all o'er.
Should you, fair patriots, come to dress so thin;
How clear might all your—sentiments be seen:
To foreign looms no longer owe your charms;
Nor make their trade more fatal than their arms.
Each British dame, who courts her country's praise,
By quitting these outlandish modes, might raise
(Not from yon powder'd hand, so thin, so spruce)
Ten able bodied men, for—public use.

But now a serious word about the play.——
Auspicious smile on this his first essay;
Ye generous Britons! your own sons inspire;
Let your applauses fan their native fire.
Then other Shakespeares yet may rouze the stage,
And other Otways melt another age.

A NUPTIAL SONG, *intended to have been inſerted in the* Fourth Act.

COME, gentle Venus! and aſſwage
A warring world, a bleeding age.
For nature lives beneath thy ray,
The wint'ry tempeſts haſte away;
A lucid calm inveſts the ſea,
Thy native deep is full of thee;
The flowering earth, where'er you fly,
Is all o'er ſpring, all ſun the ſky.
A genial ſpirit warms the breeze
Unſeen among the blooming trees,
The feather'd lovers tune their throat,
The deſert growls a ſoften'd note,
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
And love and harmony go round.

But chief into the human heart
You ſtrike the dear delicious dart,
You teach us pleaſing pangs to know,
To languiſh in luxurious woe;
To feel the generous paſſions riſe,
Grow good by gazing, wild by ſighs;
Each happy moment to improve,
And fill the perfect year with love.

Come,

Come, thou delight of heaven and earth!
To whom all creatures owe their birth;
Oh come, ſweet ſmiling! tender, come!
And yet prevent our final doom.
For long the furious god of war,
Has cruſh'd us with his iron-car,
Has rag'd along our ruin'd plains,
Has ſoil'd them with his cruel ſtains,
Has ſunk our youth in endleſs ſleep,
And made the widow'd virgin weep.
Now let him feel thy wonted charms;
Oh take him to thy twining arms!
And, while thy boſom heaves on his,
While deep he prints the humid kiſs,
Ah then! his ſtormy heart controul,
And ſigh thyſelf into his ſoul.

AGAMEMNON.

A

TRAGEDY.

TO HER

ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

Princeſs of WALES.

MADAM,

I Humbly beg leave to put this Tragedy under the Protection of Your ROYAL HIGHNESS; and hope You will condeſcend to accept of it, as a Teſtimony

DEDICATION.

of the moſt unfeigned and zealous Reſpect, due no leſs to Your Admirable Virtues, than to Your High Rank, from,

MADAM,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Moſt dutiful and moſt

Obedient humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PROLOGUE.

By the Author of EURYDICE.

Spoken by Mr QUIN.

WHEN this decisive night, at length, appears,
The night of every author's hopes and fears;
What shifts to bribe applause, poor poets try?
In all the forms of wit they court and lie:
These meanly beg it, as an alms: and these,
By boastful bluster, dazzle and impose.
Nor poorly fearful, nor securely vain,
Ours would, by honest ways, that grace obtain,
Would, as a freeborn wit, be fairly try'd:
And then—let truth and candour fair, decide.
He courts no friend, who blindly comes to praise:
He dreads no foe—but whom his faults may raise.
Indulge a generous pride, that bids him own
He aims to please, by noble means, alone;
By what may win the judgment, wake the heart,
Inspiring nature, and directing art:
By scenes, so wrought, so rais'd, as may command
Applause, more from the head, than from the hand.
Important is the moral we would teach:
(Oh may this Island practise what we preach!)
Vice in its first approach with care to shun:
The wretch, who once engages, is undone.
Crimes lead to greater crimes, and link so fast,
What first was accident, at last is fate:
Guilt's baneful servant sinks into a slave;
And virtue's last sad struggling cannot save.
As such our fair attempt, we hope to see
" Our judges,—here at least—from influence free.
" One place,—unbiass'd yet by party rage,—
" Where only honour votes,—the British stage.
" We ask for pardon, for indulgence too;
" Our last best license must proceed from you."

The Perſons repreſented.

AGAMEMNON,	by	Mr *Quin.*
EGISTHUS,		Mr *Milward.*
MELISANDER,		Mr *Cibber.*
ARCAS,		Mr *Wright.*
ORESTES,		Mr *Green.*
TALTHYBIUS Herald,		Mr *Havard.*
OFFICERS, &c.		

CLYTEMNESTRA,	by	Mrs *Porter.*
CASSANDRA,		Mrs *Cibber.*
ELECTRA,		Miſs *Brets.*
ATTENDANT of *Clytemneſtra*,		Mrs *Furnival.*
TROJAN Captives, &c.		

SCENE.

The Palace of *Agamemnon*, in *Mycenæ*.

AGAMEMNON.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA *ſitting in a diſconſolate poſture, and her* ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

O Clytemneſtra! O my royal miſtreſs!
Can then nô comfort ſooth your woes a while?
E'er ſince that flaming ſignal of ſack'd Troy,
That ſignal ſix'd and prom'is'd by the king,
Was ſeen ſome nights ago, nor food has paſs'd
Your loathing lips, nor ſleep has bleſs'd your eyes,
Or if perhaps a tranſient ſlumber hush'd
Your ſighs a moment, and reſtrain'd your tears;

Sudden,

16512.

Ideo, you, ſtarting wildly, would exclaim
Of Guilt, Egiſthus, Troy, and Agamemnon.
Sure 'tis too much, my queen.
Clyt. Away! away!
Since my loſt ſtate admits of no relief,
To that ſad comfort of the wretched leave me,
To yield me to my ſorrows.
Atten. Here me, madam.
Once the dear burden of theſe aged arms?
My tender care from life's firſt opened bud?
My joy! my glory! hear your faithful ſervant,
And, let me add, your friend.—In reaſon's eye,
That never judges on a partial view,
Far leſs than your misfortune is your guilt.——
Your guilt—Forgive me, 'tis too harſh a word,
For what deſerves compaſſion more than blame.
I know the treacherous ways by which you ſunk,
From pleaſing peace, to theſe unhappy fears,
This anxious tumult.——
Clyt. Hide me from the view!
All comfort is in vain.—Away!
Atten. Allow me,
To plead your injur'd cauſe againſt yourſelf.
When Agamemnon led the Greeks to Troy,
And left you, madam, for the pomp of war;
Left you the pride of Greece in full-blown beauty,
The kindeſt mother and the fondeſt wife;
Fame ſays true, for Trojan captives left you—
But that apart.—How did he leave you, ſay?
Afflicted, outrag'd, as a queen and mother;
Betray'd to Aulis with your firſt-born Hope,

The

The blooming Iphigenia, under feint
Of her immediate marriage to Achilles;
And there no sooner at the wind-bound fleet
Arriv'd, but you beheld her spotless blood
Stream on the fully'd altar of Diana,
The price of winds, of a dear purchas'd gale,
To bear them on to Troy. Thus pierc'd with grief
Then fir'd by turns to rage, almost to vengeance,
At an ambitious, cruel, haughty husband;
While all your passions were together mix'd,
And ready for a change; was you not left
In a submissive soothing lover's power,
Ordain'd your partner in the sovereign rule,
O'er Argos and Mycenæ, but to you
As pliant still as Agamemnon stately?

Clyt. Rising.

Alas! too true! You touch the source of woe.
Why did you leave me, barbarous Agamemnon?
Why leave me weeping o'er a murder'd daughter?
Why helpless leave me to a troubled mind?
Ah! why yourself betray me to a lover!
What arts Egisthus us'd too well I know;
All that can softly steal, or gaily charm,
The heart of woman——Hence, dear sad ideas!
Destroyers hence! And dare you tempt me still,
Perfidious Sirens! in that very moment
When your false charms have wreckt my peace for ever!
Oh, nature! wherefore, nature, are we form'd
One contradiction? the continual sport
Of fighting powers? Oh! wherefore hast thou sown

Such

Such war within us, such unequal conflict,
Between slow reason and impetuous passion?
Passion, resistless hurries us away,
Ere lingering reason to our aid can come;
And to upbraid us then is only serves
Tormentor, cease!

Attend. You wrong yourself too much.
Think, madam, how for years you baffled love:
Nor could Ægisthus, tho' he touch'd your heart,
Tho' many a midnight tear, and secret sigh,
To me, and me alone, disclos'd the pangs,
That dim'd your fading cheek; yet could he not,
With all his arts, his love, submission, charms,
O'ercome the struggling purpose of your soul;
Till Melisander, to a desert isle,
He banish'd from your ear.

Cyt. Ah, Melisander!
Given to the beasts a prey, or wilder famine;
Ah, perish'd friend! serene directing light,
By Agamemnon left to guide my counsels;
Whom every science, every muse adorn'd,
While the good honest heart enrich'd them all;
Oh hadst thou still remain'd, then I, this day,
Had been as glorious as I now am wretched!
There breathes a felt divinity in virtue,
In candid, unassuming, generous virtue,
Whose every silence speaks; and which inspires,
Without proud formal lessons a disdain
Of mean injurious vice. But lost with him,
With Melisander, reason, honour, pride,
Truth, sound advice, my better genius fled;

Friend-

I friendleſs, flatter'd, importun'd, and charm'd,
Was left alone with all-ſeducing love;
Love to the future blind, each ſober thought,
Each conſequence deſpiſing, ſcorning all,
But what its own enchanting dreams ſuggeſt.
What could I do?—Away! ſelf-flattering guile!
I ſhould have thought, when honour once is ſully'd,
Not weeping mercy's tears can waſh it clean;
And that one blot on mine diffus'd a ſtain
O'er the proud honour of a wedded king,
And o'er my children's, my poor blameleſs children's!
Whoſe cheeks will kindle at their mother's name:
I ſhould have thought—Would I could think no more!
To think is torture!

Atten. What avails it, madam—

Clyt. O Meliſander! If the dead could hear,
I would invoke thy friendly influence now,
Would wiſh thee preſent in this hour of trouble.
Perhaps there is in wiſdom, gentle wiſdom,
That knows our frailties, therefore can forgive,
Some healing comfort for a guilty mind,
Some power to charm it into peace again,
And bid it ſmile anew with right affections.
No! fruitleſs wiſh!—It cannot, cannot be!
Egiſthus who may henceforth give me laws;
Dread of diſcovery, the worſt tyrant, ſhame,
And my own conſcious plotted hein forbid it,
Forbid retreat—

Atten. Madam, behold the man,
Who, then upon the watch, obſerv'd the ſignal

Of

Of conquer'd Troy, and now attends your orders
To give a full account of what he saw.

SCENE II.

CLYTEMNESTRA, *her* ATTENDANTS, *and the* MAN *who observed the signal.*

Clyt. Are you then sure that you beheld this signal?
Or was it not some vision of the brain,
That painted, while you slept, your waking wish?
Or else perhaps some meteor of the night?
Man. Madam, Troy doubtless lies one heap of ruins;
I saw the signal of its fate distinctly.
The night was dark and still. A heavier gloom
Ne'er cover'd earth. In low'ring clouds, the stars
Were muffled deep; and not one ray, below,
O'er all Mycenæ glimmer'd, or around it.
When strait, at farthest east, a ruddy light
Sprung up, and wide encreasing, roll'd along:
By turns diminish'd, and by turns renew'd,
A wave of fire: at last, it flam'd, conspir'd,
From isle to isle, and beachy point to point:
Till the last blaze at Nauplia ended plain.
A glorious sight! and as a Greek rejoic'd me.
Clyt. How sits the wind?
Man. It blows from Troy, direct,
A bold and steady gale.

Clyt.

Clyt. 'Tis well. Retire,
Your care and faithful pains ſhall be rewarded.

SCENE III.

CLYTEMNESTRA, *her* ATTENDANT.

Clyt. He comes! he comes! the hapleſs victor comes!
Even now his trophy'd veſſel ſtreaks the main,
And ploughs the billows with triumphant prow;
Or, by glad crowds receiv'd, perhaps, he hails
His native ſhore, and preſſes on to ſhame.
Even now with glory charg'd, with conqueſt gay,
Crown'd with the laurels of ten famous years,
He dreams to join them to the peaceful olive;
And, after rugged toils and perilous war,
Soft to repoſe him on the myrtle bed
Of calm domeſtic bliſs. How vain the hopes!
How ſhort the proſpect of believing man!
I dare not look before me, dare not paint
The riſing ſtorm.

Atten. Behold Egiſthus, Madam.

Clyt. Leave me.

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

EGISTHUS, *after ſome ſilence.*

And is it thus, O Clytemneſtra,
Thus that, in hours of danger lovers meet?
[*Pauſing.*
Still

Still coldly silent, still the look averted,
Where not one softness glows? While anger, fear,
Disgust, and sick repentance, shifting, cloud
Your vary'd cheek. 'Tis plain you never lov'd.
Clyt. Oh that I never had!
Egist. You never did.
The very power to wish it proves you did not.
Clyt. He ne'er deserv'd my love, who dares suspect it.
Egist. Not to suspect it weakness were and folly.
Clyt. Not only doubt; believe your doubts.
Egist. I do
Clyt. You do!
Egist. Nay more, am of their truth assur'd:
Clyt. 'Tis base, ungrateful, an ungenerous insult,
To tell me this. Urge not too far, Egisthus,
Urge not too far my guilt-dejected spirit.
Tho' you have trampled on my haughty virtue,
That noble pride of soul, which knows no fear,
And bears no insult; yet to you, at least,
To you of all mankind, I will be bold,
As I had never err'd, will be a queen,
The blood of Jove, be Clytemnestra still.
Egist. Be temperate, madam: I have told you nothing,
But that I am not worthy of your love.
Clyt. Curse on that pride! which with affected brow,
Humility conceals. And am I then to you,
So lost to reason, honour, common honour;
As without love, that all-compelling fury,

With-

Without debaſing, thoughtleſs, blind blind love,
To bow me from the height of happy life,
To this low fearful ſtate of coward ſhame?
Miſtake me not—I would not waſte one word,
One paſſing word, affronted thus, to ſave you
From jealouſy's worſt rage; did not, alas!
A kind of mournful juſtice to myſelf
Tear from my ſwelling heart the mean confeſſion.
How art thou fallen! to what diſhonour fallen!
Unhappy Clytemneſtra!

Egiſt. Harſh conſtruction!
And yet theſe frowns delight, that anger charms me.
O more than lovely! O majeſtic fair-one!
Since you then know the jealous force of love,
Forgive its tender fears, its fond offence;
Offence I could not mean.

Clyt. Ill-fated ſhe!
Who muſt forgive.

Egiſt. Nay rather caſt me from you,
Than thus upbraid me with ſo forc'd a pardon.
O Clytemneſtra! where are now thoſe looks,
Thoſe looks of ſmiling heaven, of radiant ſweetneſs,
That wak'd our morn of love! Within whoſe ſphere
No evil durſt approach, no ſadneſs dwell;
While the charm'd gazer knew nor fear nor danger?
And ſet they then at laſt in gloomy quarrels?
Let us not quarrel. Why ſhould lovers quarrel?
Life is for love too ſhort, too precious time;
Theſe moments chiefly, theſe impetuous moments,
That to the brink of ruin ſeem to roll
Our mingled fate. Even now—

Clyt. 'Tis true! 'tis true!
Alas! methinks, in every hollow blaſt,
That ſhakes this palace, Agamemnon comes.
Yes, yes, Egiſthus, ſtill a proof remains,
A matchleſs proof of love, I mean to give you.
Glad will I throw this regal pomp aſide,
And, inſtant with you ſeek ſome diſtant country,
Some gloomy Thracian dale, where piny Hemus
May wrap us in impenetrable ſhade:
There, there, the coarſeſt life, fed by hard toil,
Will be luxurious eaſe to what I feel,
To this big pang that labours at my heart,
And fires my mingling paſſions into anguiſh.
Quick! let us fly, Egiſthus, fly this moment!
The next my ſeize us, bind us down to ſhame,
Detected ſhame!

Egiſt. What! Clytemneſtra! fly!
That is indeed the road direct to ſhame,
To infamy for ever. He who flies,
In war or peace, who his great purpoſe yields,
He is the only villain of this world:
But he who labours firm and gains his point,
Be what it will, which crowns him with ſucceſs,
He is the ſon of fortune and of fame,
By thoſe admir'd, thoſe ſpecious villains moſt,
That elſe had bellow'd out reproach againſt him.
Beſides your huſband, your ſelf-glorious huſband,
Proud Agamemnon, who ten years has ward
At Troy, to ſcourge your ſiſter Helen's rape,
Dream you that he would not purſue our flight,
Tho'

Tho' we took ſhelter in Cimmerian ſhades,
And drag us back, the ſcorn of hiſſing Greece,
To their deſerv'd, to true, unpity'd ſhame.

Clyt. Excuſe my weaker heart. But how, Egiſthus,
How ſhall I bear an injur'd huſband's eye?
The fierceſt foe wears not a look ſo dreadful,
As does the man we wrong.

Egiſ. Madam, your fears
Caſt a falſe glare upon your troubled reaſon,
That blinds it quite — An injur'd huſband he!
He wrong'd! No, Clytemneſtra never, never,
Can never wrong her tyrant Agamemnon,
Tyrant of common Greece; can never wrong
The man who leaves her ten regardleſs years,
For the vain honours of a fooliſh war;
Nay, who conſum'd thoſe years, if fame ſpeaks true,
In nothing leſs than war; inſtead of war,
In ſhameful ſquabbles with his nobler friends,
About their captive females, training out
An amorous revel rather than a war,
Far from his country, family, and queen.
And can you wrong this falſe one? Think of Aulis.
How baſely to that port you was betray'd,
And what dire nuptials waited there your daughter.
Think with what price he bought his cruel trophies.
Behold the firſt-born bloſſom of your youth,
Your Iphigenia, her mild eyes dejected,
Her cheek o'ercaſt with fear, her boſom bare,
An helpleſs, harmleſs, uncomplaining victim,
Stab'd by the murderous Calchas; whilſt her father
Her unrelenting father, to protect

The ſacrifice, ſtands by. Behold, ſhe bleeds,
Pours the rich ſtream ſhe drew from that fair boſom,
Falls like a drooping flower untimely cut;
And all to purchaſe her ſire's impatience,
From ſome fell demon that bely'd Diana,
A riſing gale. The gale begins to blow,
The pendants flutter; when away he goes,
Gaily he goes; and leaves a wretched mother,
To weep her murder'd child:—If yet one ſpark
Of wonted ſpirit burns in Clytemneſtra,
If ſhe ſtill lives to juſtice and to nature;
Theſe, theſe are wrongs, that call aloud for vengeance;
And there are hands that boldly—ſtart not, madam—
That will with pride avenge you.

Clyt. Ha! What hands?
What vengeance, ſay? Touch not ſo wild a ſtring;
It wakes new diſcord in my jarring ſoul.
To the juſt gods, not us, pertaineth vengeance.
I cannot, will not, e'er conſent to—Gods!
Where rove my tongue?—You did forbid the mention of it,
You did not mean it ſure—O ſpare, Egiſthus,
In pity ſpare my laſt remains of virtue!
Oh make me not beyond recovery vile!
A horror to myſelf!—How wretched they,
Who feel, yet cannot ſave their dying virtue!

[*A ſhout heard.*

What means this tranſport of the maddening people?
Oh my preſaging heart!—Save me!—Again!
Ah! little think they how their joy diſtracts me!

Egiſt. Some move this way.—Reſume your temper, madam.

SCENE

SCENE V.

To CLYTEMNESTRA *an* OFFICER *belonging to the court.*

Offic. Madam, the king is near, from Nauplia comes;
But ſuch rejoicing crowds around him throng,
As makes his journey ſlow. Juſt now arriv'd
Talthybius brings the news, and craves admittance.
Clyt. Conduct him hither.

SCENE VI.

Clytemneſtra alone.

Oh too faithful ſignal!
Now muſt I take another ſtep in vice.
Down, ſtubborn heart! and learn diſſimulation.
Yes, learn to ſmile, tho' ſorrow wrap thee round;
Learn to be friends with baſeneſs.—See! how gay
This herald ſtrides along! Miſtaken man!

SCENE VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, TALTHYBIUS, *with ſome* Grecian *ſoldiers that attend him.*

Clyt. Welcome, Talthybius; welcome, ye brave Greeks.
How fares the king?

Tal. Madam, the king is well;
Health, happineſs, and glory, join to crown him.
His heart, impatient to confer with yours,
Sends me before him with its warmeſt wiſhes,
Its warmeſt gratulations. "Tell," he ſaid,
"Go tell my Clytemneſtra, that the thoughts
"Of meeting her awake a dearer joy
"Than conqueſt ever gave: even tedious ſeems
"My people's love, that loſes me a moment."
This crown which circled once the royal brows
Of Hecuba, of Priam's lofty queen,
He prays you to accept.

Clyt. There, ſet it down.
I own, Talthybius, the ſoft moiſture fills
My womaniſh eyes, while on the ſudden turns
Of fate I think, on fortune's ſad reverſes.
Oft when blind mortals think themſelves ſecure,
In height of bliſs, they touch the brink of ruin.
But ſure your voyage has been wondrous quick,
Not three full days.—Is all the fleet returned?

Tal. No, madam; none, except this ſingle ſhip,
Which bore the king: the reſt are ſcatter'd wide.
When to the joyous breeze we ſpread our ſails,
And left that bay, where Simois and Scamander
Mix with the rapid Helleſpont; while Troy,
Or what was Troy, yet wreathing ſmoke to heaven,
And Ida's woody top, receding, ſunk
Beneath the trembling main, the ſky was fair;
And, wing'd our courſe with ſlender furs, we ſail'd,
Till ſtrait as evening fell, the fluttering gale,
Increaſing gradual from the red north-eaſt,

Blew

Blew stiff and fierce. At last the tempest howl'd,
Next morning, nought but angry seas and skies
Appear'd, conflicting, round. Mean-time, right on
Our strong-ribb'd vessel drove before the blast,
That, falling somewhat of its fury, gave us
A quick auspicious voyage. Safe, we pass'd
The Cyclad isles, that, o'er the troubled deep,
Seem'd then to float amidst the mingling storm.
Only at one, with much ado, we touch'd,
Nor without risk.

Clyt. And why?

Tal. Madam, compell'd
By sacred pity. On the foaming beach,
A miserable figure beck'ning stood,
Horrid and wild, with famine worn away.
His plaintive voice, half by the murmuring surge
Absorpt, just reach'd our ears. In Greek he call'd,
And strong adjur'd us by the gentle gods,
That make the wretched their peculiar care,
To bear him thence, from savage solitude,
Into the chearful haunts of men again.

Clyt. What?—Of condition look'd he?

Tal. So he seem'd;
Tho' dim'd by helpless solitary life.
The king regards him much.—Forgive me, madam;
I see the rueful image but disturbs
Your generous soul.

Clyt. I thank you, good Talthybius;
And from the king himself will learn the rest.
This ring, on which a victory is carv'd,
With curious art, besits the news you bring;
I am your debtor still; and, soldiers, yours.

The End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ATTENDANT.

Clyt. ARriv'd ſo ſoon! I am not half prepar'd:
My features all are ſunk with conſcious ſhame;
My eyes are yet too tender to diſſemble.
Atten. Madam, be firm. Wipe off theſe gloomy tears,
In which too plain is read your troubled ſoul.
Juſt now the trumpet ſpoke the king's approach.
Clyt. 'Tis come, at laſt, the trying hour is come!
Oh that my heart were hard, and features falſe!—
Again theſe trumpets ſwell——
Atten. A moment, madam,
A moment will betray you.
Clyt. Open, earth,
And ſwallow up my ſhame!—What can I do?
Where look? what ſay? confuſion! torture!
Atten. Madam——
Clyt. Ah, coward that I am! Was there no dagger,
To ſave this ten-fold death?
Atten. Hark! loud and near,

The triumph comes.

Clyt. Well.—give me breath—

[*Endeavouring to compose her agitation.*

AGAMEMNON, *behind the Scenes.*

A moment,

Leave me, my friends.

Clyt. Ha! heard you not his voice?

Yes, yes, 'tis he! Go bring my children hither:

They may relieve me.

Aſten. O remember!

Clyt. Heavens!

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA.

Agam. Where is my life! my love! my Clytemneſtra!

O let me preſs thee to my fluttering ſoul,

That is on wing to mix itſelf with thine!

O thou, for whom I live, for whom I conquer,

Than glory brighter! O my Clytemneſtra!

Now, in this dear embrace, I loſe the toils

Of ten years war; abſence, with all its pains,

Is, by this charming moment, wip'd away.

All-bounteous gods! ſure, never was a heart

So full, ſo bleſt as mine.—(*Diſcovering her diſorder.*)

But whence, my faireſt!

What mean theſe tears? Not tears of happy love,

Such as I ſhed.—What means that clouded look,

Whoſe

Whose downcaſt ſweetneſs will not ſhine upon me?
Why this cold meeting? Why unkindly damp'd
My ardor thus? Oh ſpeak, my Clytemneſtra!

Clyt. Forgive me, Agamemnon; but I cannot,
Ah! I cannot ſee your face again,
Without reflecting where I ſaw you laſt.
Aulis is preſent to my eyes anew,
The ſhips, the chiefs, the guards, the bloody Calchas,
All the dire pomp of ſacrifice around:
Anew my daughter bleeds, baſely deceiv'd!
And when I ſee that awful brow, that doom'd her,
Can Agamemnon wonder at my tears!

Agam. Why will my Clytemneſtra add new ſtings
To what here rankles but too deep already?
Oh! why impute to me the work of fate?
'Tis not indulging private inclination,
The ſtrongeſt paſſion, that ſuſtains the world,
And leads its rulers grace; no, 'tis not thence
That glory ſprings, and high immortal deeds:
The public good, the good of others, ſtill
Muſt bear fond nature down, in him who dares
Aſpire to worthy rule; imperious honour
Still o'er the moſt diſtinguiſh'd lords it moſt.
Was it for me?—Let even your paſſions judge—
For Agamemnon was it, when ordain'd,
By common voice, the general of the Greeks;
While twenty kings beneath his banner march'd;
And while around me full-aſſembled Greece,
Indignant, kindled at your ſiſter's rape,
On her old native foe demanding vengeance;

On

On faithleſs Aſia: Was it then for me,
To quench this glorious flame; and to refuſe
One life to thouſands, to thoſe generous thouſands,
That for my honour, for the dearer honour
Of Clytemneſtra's family, ſtood all
Prepar'd to die? If to the mingled voice,
Of honour, duty, glory, public good,
Of the commanding gods, I had been deaf;
And, in the feeble father, poorly ſunk,
The Greek, the chief, the patriot, and the king,
Greater than king, the general of the Greeks;
Then you yourſelf, my Clytemneſtra's ſelf,
Muſt (let her heart avow the truth) have ſcorn'd me.
Nor think it was an eaſy reſignation.
Oh Clytemneſtra! Had you ſeen within
What here within my tortur'd boſom paſs'd;
To that my battles ſince were only ſport.
No, not the kindeſt mother, bath'd in tears,
As o'er her agonizing babe ſhe hangs,
Feels what I ſuffer'd then—You may remember—
Again the father melts me at the thought—
You may remember how I hid my face;
Aſham'd to let the Greeks behold the tears,
That miſbecame their general's cheek.
Then ceaſe to blame what rather merits pity,
I might add, praiſe.—He, who the father's heart
More tender has than mine, can tender has it.
I love my children, as a father ſhould;
Beſides, I love them from a ſofter cauſe,
I love my Clytemneſtra.

Clyt.

Clyt. Had, alas!
Had Agamemnon lov'd me, would he, nay,
Could he have left me in the rage of grief,
My daughter yet freſh bleeding in my ſight?
Left me ſo long? love ſurely muſt have found,
In the wide round of ten revolving years,
Some way to ſee me, to prevent theſe ſorrows——
Why was I thus abandon'd, Agamemnon?

Agam. Let me kiſs off theſe tears. O beauteous tears!
If ſhed by doubting love, if ſhed for abſence.
Inſtead of theſe reproaches, aſk me rather
How I that abſence bore: and here all words,
All eloquence is dumb, to ſpeak the pangs,
That lurk'd beneath the rugged brow of war.
When glaring day was clos'd, and huſh'd the camp,
Oh! then, amid ten thouſand other cares,
Theſe ſtung the keeneſt that remember'd thee,
That on my long-left Clytemneſtra thought,
On what wild ſe[illegible] mountains lay between us.

Clyt. Unhappy [illegible]!

Agam. What ſays my Clytemneſtra?

Clyt. Unhappy mortals! by vain words deceiv'd,
To their own pride, to ſoyleſs honour ſlaves.

Agam. He, he, alone, can claim a right to bliſs,
Who has fulfill'd the [illegible] task of honour.

Clyt. But what avails a right [illegible] bliſs?

Agam. Let me once more adjure thee, Clytemneſtra,
By every tender name of love adjure thee,
To loſe in kind oblivion theſe our paſt——

There

I would not call them quarrels--Ah there was,
There was a time--I will indulge the thought--
When join'd to vernal life, the ſpring of love
Around us gaily blow'd! and heaven and earth,
All ſmiling nature look'd delighted on.
Yet, would my Clytemneſtra lend her aid,
I know a paſſion ſtill more deeply charming
Than fever'd youth e'er felt; and that is love,
By long experience mellow'd into friendſhip.
How far beyond that froward child of fancy!
With beauty pleas'd a while, anon diſguſted,
Seeking ſome other toy; how far more noble
Is this bright offspring of unchanging reaſon,
That fonder grows with age, and charms for ever!
It is not often, Clytemneſtra, thus,
That I ſubmit to double my intreaties;
But, oh deſtroy not the collected hopes
Of life and love! Oh make not conqueſt hateful!
I ſhall abhor it, if it coſt me thee,
Coſt me thy love. A daughter was too much,
And ten years abſence from thy Clytemneſtra,
Add not to theſe a loſs I cannot bear,
The loſs of thee, thou loveliest of thy ſex!
And once the kindeſt!

Clyt. Oh!

Agam. Turn not away;
There is relenting goodneſs in my look.

Clyt. Alas! untimely fondneſs——Agamemnon!
Too tenderous Agamemnon! you diſtreſs me.
Would you were not ſo kind, ſo tender, now!
Or ne'er had been ſo cruel!

Agam. 'Tis unjuſt
To call me cruel. Fate, the gods, our fortune,
Were cruel to us both—What could I more
To ſooth our parting woes, and eaſe my abſence?
I left you Meliſander to adviſe you,
Left you the wiſeſt, faithfulleſt, and beſt—
Oh whiſpering nature! Are not theſe my children?

SCENE III.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, ORESTES.

Agam. My daughter! my Electra!
Elec. O my father!
Agam. Come to my arms, my boy! my dear Oreſtes!
In whom I live anew, my younger ſelf!
And thou, Electra; in thy opening cheek
I mark thy mother's bloom: even ſo ſhe look'd,
Such the mild light with which her beauty dawn'd.
Oh thou ſoft image of my Clytemneſtra!
My other Iphigenia!
Elec. Oh my father!
My joy! my pride! my glory! whom in dreams,
I oft have ſeen, as if return'd from Troy;
But ſtill unwelcome morning, with a tear,
Wip'd out the dear illuſion of the night.
And is it then no more a faithleſs viſion?
Oh 'tis my father! whoſe abſtruſe abſence,

And

And Iphigenia's death I juſt remember.
How glorious, Iphigenia, was thy death!
A death I envy rather than lament.
Who would not die to gain immortal fame,
Deliver Greece, and crown a father's glory?
Agam. Come to my arms again, my generous daughter!
And thou, my ſon! O that thy tender years
Had ſuffered thee to ſhare our toils at Troy!
'Tis war that forms the prince: 'tis hardſhip, toil;
'Tis ſleepleſs nights, and never-reſting days;
'Tis pain, 'tis danger, 'tis affronted death;
'Tis equal fate for all, and changing fortune;
That rear the mind to glory, that inſpire
The nobleſt virtues and the gentleſt manners.
Where ſhall I find, to teach thee theſe, Oreſt,
Another Troy?
Oreſt. How happy had I been!
To have beheld what I muſt only hear!
But I will hear it often, every day;
Will learn your ſtory, ſtudy your example;
Will try to mix your virtues with your blood,
And not diſgrace the laurels I inherit.
My boſom flutters with I know not what—
---Forgive me, Sir, I am too young to ſay it---
But ſomething here I feel, which bids me hope
That I ſhall not betray my father's honour.
Agam. Son of my ſoul!-----Look here, my Clytemnæſtra!
Look here and weep with tenderneſs and tranſport!
What is all boaſtleſs luxury to this?

To these best joys, which holy love bestows?
O nature! parent nature! thou, alone,
Art the true judge of what can make us happy!
[*Enter an officer belonging to the court.*

OFFICER.

Egisthus, Sir, attends.

Agam. Go, bid him enter.
Retire, my Clytemnestra, my dear children:
We soon shall meet again, till then farewell.

SCENE IV.

AGAMEMNON.

Obey me, features, for one supple moment;
You shall not long be tortur'd. Here, in courts,
We must not wear the soldier's honest face.
He little thinks I have him in the snare
Of Melisander, whom, in my return,
I from that desert island chanc'd to save,
To which the ruffian----.

SCENE V.

AGAMEMNON, EGISTHUS.

Egist. Health to Agamemnon!
And happiness responsive to his glory!
Agam. Cousin, I greet you well.
Egist. Forgive me, Sir,
You have surpris'd us with this quick return;

For

For by that ſignal, whoſe illuſtrious flame
Rejoic'd all Greece, we did not hope your preſence
Theſe three days hence. Forgive, that, unprepar'd,
We only with that joy, that loyal tranſport,
Which ſwell each Grecian boſom, thus receive you.
And truly ſuch a burſt I have not ſeen
Of that beſt triumph. City, country, all,
Is in a gay triumphant tempeſt toſt.
I ſcarce could preſs along. The trumpet's voice
Is loſt in loud repeated ſhouts that raiſe
Your name to heaven. Ten thouſand eyes, below,
Ake to behold the conqueror of Troy.

Agam. The nobleſt praiſe that can ſalute my ear,
The ſweeteſt muſic is my people's joy.
But ſure your tongue has done it ample juſtice;
Truſt me, you blazon a deſcription well.
I have not heard ſo much obliging ſpeech
Theſe many years.

Egiſt. Miſconſtrue not my zeal:
On the full heart obedient language waits.
I feel ſo deep your glory, Agamemnon,
As mingles with my joy a ſort of paſſion,
That almoſt touches envy. O ye gods!
Has, while I liv'd, a war, the moſt renown'd
Which any age e'er ſaw, or ſhall again
Be ſeen, a war, whoſe never-dying fame
Will cover earth, and reach remoteſt time;
Has ſuch a war adorn'd your days, and I
Not ſhar'd its glory? Pining here, unknown,
In nameleſs peace—how have I loſt my life!

Agam. This ardor is the mode. But know,
Egiſthus!

Thus ruling a free people well in peace,
Without or yielding or usurping power;
Maintaining firm the honour of the laws,
Yet sometimes softening their too rigid doom,
As mercy may require; steering the state,
Thro' factious storms, or the more dangerous calms
Of peace, by long continuance grown corrupt;
Besides the fair career which fortune opens
To the mild glories of protected arts,
To bounty, to beneficence, to deeds
That give the gods themselves their brightest beams:
Yes, know, that these are, in true glory, equal,
If not superior to deluding conquest:
Nor less demand they conduct, courage, care,
And persevering toil.

Egist. Say, thankless toil,
Harsh and unpleasing; that instead of praise
And due reward, meets oftner scorn, reproach,
Fierce opposition to the clearest measures;
Injustice, banishment, or death itself:
Such is the nature of malignant man.
Not so the victor's meed: him all approve,
Him all admire.

Agam. Yet tho' a toilsome task;
Tho' an ungrateful labour oft to rule,
I not so hardly of mankind, Egisthus,
Presume to judge. Truth, wisdom, courage, justice,
Beneficence, and for the public good
A constant tenor of well-laid designs,
Must still be awful in the work of times;
Be amiable, dear; while worth, at last

Will

Will light up worth, and virtue kindle virtue.
You was however eas'd of half the toil,
By him I left to counsel Clytemnestra,
By Melisander.

Egist. Would to heaven I had!

Agam. You much amaze me----Is not Melisander
Wise, just, and faithful?

Egist. Sir, I must confess
He wore a specious mask-----

Agam. Beware Egisthus;
I know his fredfast worth, and will not bear
The farthest hint that stains the man I love.

Egist. Then urg'd by truth, and in my own defence,
I boldly will assert him, Agamemnon,
To be more apt to trouble and embroil,
Than serve a state. A certain stubborn virtue,
I would say affectation of blunt virtue,
Beneath whose outside froth, fermenting lay,
Pride, envy, faction, turbulence of soul,
And democrative views, in some sort made him
A secret traitor, equally unfit
Or to obey or rule. But that I check'd
His early treasons, here at your return,
You might have found your kingdom a republic.

Agam. O I shall lose all patience!— [*Aside.*
You do well,
To give your accusation open speech.
Mean-time, remember you must fully prove it,
You must!—And he who Melisander proves
The wretch you have describ'd, proves man is vain,
And saps the broad foundations of all trust.

I know

I know he would not patiently look on,
And ſuffer ill deſigns to gather ſtrength,
Awaiting gentle ſeaſons; yes, I know,
He had a troubleſome old faſhion'd way
Of ſhocking courtly ears with horrid truth.
He was no civil ruffian: none of thoſe,
Who lie with twiſted looks, betray with ſhrugs---
I wax too warm---But he was none of thoſe,
Is none of thoſe duſt-licking, reptile, cloſe,
Inſinuating, ſpeckled, ſmooth court-ſerpents,
That make it ſo unſafe, chiefly for kings,
To walk this weedy world---Pardon my heat---
I wander from the purpoſe---You, Egiſthus,
Muſt prove your charge, to Meliſander's face.
Muſt prove it.

Egiſt. Surely---Since the princely faith
Of your own blood you doubt---

Agam. Friendſhip and truth
Are more a-kin to me than blood.

Egiſt. You ſhall,
You ſhall have proof; but to his face you cannot.

Agam. But to his face I will!---I cannot! Why?

Egiſt. He wanders far from hence, I know not where:
For when I found him an undoubted traitor,
Tho' he the heavieſt puniſhment deſerv'd;
Yet in regard to that eſteem which, once,
You deign'd to bear him, baniſhment alone
Was all I did inflict.

Agam. I thank you, ſir,
O you are wondrous good!---But tell me, how,

How

How durſt you meddle in the ſphere aſſign'd
To Clytemneſtra? He was left to her.
To be her counſellor I left my friend,
Left Meliſander; left a man, whom long,
Whom well I knew; perhaps, to check you, left
him:
And you pretend, you!—But I will be calm—
Theſe paſſions in a king to his inferiors,
Who cannot anſwer equal, are not comely.
Forgive my tranſport—A more quiet hour
Shall ſift this matter to the bottom, ſhall
Do Meliſander or Egiſthus juſtice.

SCENE VI.

EGISTHUS.

Now go thy way, weak open-hearted man,
Thus to declare the ruin thou intendeſt.
Go, rate thy Trojan ſlaves; and elſewhere practiſe
This inſolence of camps. Tame, as I ſeem,
Submiſſive, mild, and patient of thy threats;
Yet, ere to morrow's ſun beholds Mycenæ,
My ſure-aim'd blow ſhall pierce thy ſwelling heart,
And cool this tyrant fever in thy veins.
Were not our blood, our kindred blood at variance,
And therefore burning with immortal hate;
Had not thy father Atreus, at a banquet,
A dreadful banquet! from whoſe ſight the ſun
Turn'd back eclips'd, ſer'd—Monſtrous!—up to
mine,

To

To his own brother, to the pale Thyeſtes,
His murder'd ſons: didſt thou not wear a crown
Then by thy father raviſh'd from our line,
Mycenæ's crown, which he unjuſtly ſeiz'd,
And added to his own, to that of Argos:
Had I not ſtain'd thy bed with Clytemneſtra:
Tho' ſafety did not urge, and ſelf-defence:
Yet this vile treatment, treatment fit for ſlaves;
Thanks to thy fury! this has fix'd thy doom.
Some fooliſh ſcruples, that ſtill hung about me,
Are by this friendly tempeſt blown away.--
But Clytemneſtra comes. How ſhall I calm
Her troubled mind? How bring her to my purpoſe?

SCENE VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Clyt. Here let me kneel, Egiſthus, graſp thy knees;
Here let me grow till my requeſt be granted.
Now is the very criſis of my fate.
Egiſt. What ſight is this I ſee? Riſe, Clytemneſtra,
Thou faireſt, moſt majeſtic of thy ſex!
It miſbecomes thee much this ſuppliant poſture.
O there is nothing, nothing, ſure, which you
Need ſtoop to aſk. I ſpeak, and command it, madam.
Clyt. Then let us henceforth be, as if true love
Had never been, betwixt us.
Egiſt. Ceaſe to love thee?
What wild demand! impoſſible! Even now,

For

Endear'd by danger, by diſtreſs endear'd,
I for thee feel a fonder pang, than e'er
I felt before.

Clyt. No! theſe deluding words
Can charm no longer; their enchantment flies;
And in my breaſt the guilty paſſions jar
Unkind, unjoyous, unharmonious all.
Ah me! from real happineſs we ſtray,
By vice bewilder'd; vice, which always leads,
However fair at firſt, to wilds of wo.

Egiſt. Ah! Clytemneſtra! didſt thou love--

Clyt. No more!
Seduce my ſoul no more! Here will I ſtop!
Beyond this line 'tis miſery, 'tis madneſs,
The furies flaſh their torches, vultures tear,
The mingled tortures of the damn'd await me.
Oh! if your paſſions be not merely ſelfiſh,
If the leaſt tenderneſs for me you feel,
Drive me no farther down the gulf of wo!
To happineſs I bid a laſt farewell;
I aſk not happineſs: no, that I leave
To innocence and virtue; peace, alone,
Some poor remains of peace is all I aſk,
Not to be greatly wretched, plung'd in horrors!
And yet, who knows, the heavenly ſpark, that ſleeps
Beneath theſe embers, yet may ſpread anew
Its chearful luſtre--All may yet be well--
For Agamemnon was ſo kind, ſo gentle,
With ſuch a holy tender flame he burn'd,
As might have kindled in a barbarous breaſt
Humanity and virtue.

Egiſt.

Egiſ. All pretence.
I gueſs his aim! I penetrate his purpoſe.
On you he laviſh'd fondneſs, while on me
He ſcorn'd deſtruction. Doubtleſs, with his ear,
Some villain has been buſy; and he means
Firſt to divide us, then with greater eaſe,
To ruin both--And can you then be caught,
Caught with the common proſtituted ſpeeches,
That oft have ſicken'd on the glowing lip
Of many a Trojan ſlave? had Chryſeis them;
Briſeis too: and now Caſſandra, ſhe,
Who, more like a triumphant queen than captive,
Is every hour expected—

Clyt. What Caſſandra?

Egiſ. O it imports you little what Caſſandra!
Thus poorly tame you ne'er will want Caſſandras.
What is become of Clytemneſtra's ſpirit,
That ſhe can thus forget her high deſcent,
Forget her rank, her honour, nay forget
Her injuries?

Clyt. But what Caſſandra, ſay?

Egiſ. Why Priam's daughter, the prophetic
princeſs,
The proud, the young, the fair Caſſandra:
So vain of heart, ſhe dreamt Apollo lov'd her,
And, on her plighted faith to crown his love,
Beſtow'd the gift of prophecy; the gift
In her poſſeſſion, ſhe deceiv'd the god;
Whence he, provok'd, with this condition clath'd it,
Of never gaining credit. So the tale,
The fable runs---Yet, on my ſoul, I think,

Did

Did ſhe give out, ſhe would be queen of Argos,
She were indeed a propheteſs.
Clyt. 'Tis well.
You mean it for an inſult this, you do.
What elſe could tempt you to deride me, ſir,
With ſuch extravagance!
Egiſt. Miſtake me not.
I mean it, madam, for a ſerious truth,
I mean it for a certainty, if thus
You droop, unnerv'd with theſe dejecting fears;
Clyt. Caſſandra queen of Argos!
Egiſt. Yes, of Argos;
While Clytemneſtra in a priſon pines;
Where ſhe may weep, and moralize at leiſure.
Clyt. By heavens! ſhe viſits firſt her father's ſhade.
Egiſt. There ſhone your native ſelf. Let bright revenge,
I ſhould ſay juſtice, diſſipate theſe clouds,
Theſe melancholy whims of ill judg'd virtue,
And ſhew you burning with your former luſtre.
Madam, our fates are blended: know, we ſtand
Or fall together. Shame, contempt, and ruin,
Or ſafety, love, and glory, is our choice.
And can we doubt a moment?
Clyt. But Egiſthus—
Egiſt. I know the purpoſe of thy pleading eye.
Of that hereafter—We ſhall meet again——
My preſence now is wanted in the city.
Fear nothing—Thou ſhalt know before we act,
Thou, for whoſe ſake alone I act and live!

The End of the Second Act.

ACT. III. SCENE. I.

ARCAS, MELISANDER.

Arc. AND have I found my long-loſt friend again?
My Meliſander! But ſo chang'd your look,
So ſickly'd with a kind of thoughtful ſadneſs,
So ſunk each feature, by ſeven drooping years
Spent in that deſert iſle, as baffled quite
My wandering recollection.

Mel. True, dear Arcas:
For what a helpleſs creature, by himſelf,
Is the proud lord of this inferior world,
Vain, feeble man! the commoners of nature,
Each wing that flits along the ſpacious ſky,
Is leſs dependent than their ſoaring maſter.
Hail ſocial life! into thy pleaſing bounds
Again I come, to pay the common ſhare
My ſtrength of ſervice; and, in glad return,
To taſte thy comforts, thy protected joys.

Arc. O greatly welcome! you deſerve them well,
You well deſerve the ſocial life you paint.
Still on my thought your ſtrange abſence dwells!
By Agamemnon left to aid the queen,

With

With faithful counsel, while he warr'd at Troy:
And thus by Agamemnon to be sav'd,
Returning from that conquest! wondrous change!
Or rather wondrous conduct of the gods!
By mortals, from their blindness, chance misnam'd.
Mean-time, instruct me, while the king reposes,
How was you snatch'd away? and how, so long,
Could you this dreadful solitude support?
I burn to know the whole.

Mel. 'Tis thus, my friend.
While sunk in unsuspected sleep I lay,
Some midnight ruffians rush'd into my chamber,
Sent by Egisthus, who my presence deem'd
Obstructive (so I solve it) to his views;
Black views I fear, as you perhaps may know.
Sudden they seiz'd, and muffled up in darkness,
Strait bore me to the sea, whose instant prey,
I did conclude myself, when first, around
The ship unmoor'd, I heard the chiding wave.
But these fell tools of cruel power, it seems,
Had orders in a desert isle to leave me;
There hopeless, helpless, comfortless, to prove
The utmost gall and bitterness of death.
Thus malice often overshoots itself,
And some unguarded accident betrays
The man of blood. Next night—a dreary night!
Cast on the wild-est of the Cyclad isles,
Where never human foot had mark'd the shore,
These ruffians left me—Yet believe me, Arcas,
Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,
All ruffians as they were, I never heard

A ſound ſo diſmal as their parting oars.—
Then horrid ſilence follow'd, broke alone
By the low murmurs of the reſtleſs deep,
Mixt with the doubtful breeze, that now and then
Sigh'd thro' the mournful woods. Beneath a ſhade
I ſat me down, more heavily oppreſs'd,
More deſolate at heart, than e'er I felt
Before. When Philomela, o'er my head,
Began to tune her melancholy ſtrain,
As piteous of my woes; till, by degrees,
Compoſing ſleep on wounded nature ſhed
A kind but ſhort relief. At early morn,
Wak'd by the chaunt of birds, I look'd around
For uſual objects: Objects found I none,
Except before me ſtretch'd the toiling main,
And rocks and woods, in ſavage view, behind.
Wrapt for a moment in amaz'd confuſion,
My thought turn'd giddy round; when, all at once,
To memory full my dire condition ruſh'd.

Ag. But of each comfort, each convenience void,
How could you life ſuſtain? how fence againſt
Inclement ſkies?

Mel. A moſſy cave, that fac'd
The ſouthern ſea, and in whoſe deep receſs
Boil'd up a chryſtal fountain, was my home.
Herbs were my food, thoſe bleſſ'd ſtores of health!
Only when winter, from my dark retreat,
Withdrew my verdant meal, I was oblig'd
In faithleſs ſnares to ſeize, which truly griev'd me.
My ſylvan friends; that never till then had known,
And therefore dreaded leſs the ſavage man.

But

But these low hardships scarce deserve regard;
The pangs, that sharpest stung, were in my mind:
There desolation reign'd; and there, cut off
From social life, I felt a constant death.
And yet these pangs at last forgot to throb:
What cannot lenient gentle time perform?
I eat my lonely meal without a tear;
Nor sigh'd to see the dreadful night descend.
In my own breast, a world within myself,
In streams, in groves, in sunny hill, and shade;
In all that blooms with vegetable life,
Or joys with kindred animal sensation;
In the full-peopled round of azure heaven;
Whene'er I, studious, look'd, I found companions.
But, chief, the muses lent their softening aid:
At their enchanting voice my sorrows fled,
Or learn'd to please; while, thro' my troubled heart,
They breath'd the soul of harmony anew.
Thus of the great community of nature
A denizon I liv'd; and oft in hymns,
And rapturous thought, even with the gods con-
vers'd,
That not [illegible] sometimes the walks of man.
So pass'd the time, when lo! within my call,
Arriv'd the ship, which hope had often promis'd—
The ship!—O it surpass'd my fondest dream,
E'er to imagine the gay ship that came!
As on the deck I Agamemnon saw,
All glorious with the spoils of conquer'd Troy;
Ye gods! what transport, what amazement selz'd
me!
What adoration of your wondrous ways!
Expression sinks beneath them.

Arc. Sweet reward
Of manly patience! that, to fortune ſtill
Superior, ſcorns deſpair.
Mel. This theme, my friend,
Will better ſuit a leiſure hour; but now
The high concerns of life demand our care.
I have already to the king imparted
Suſpicions of Egiſthus, and remain
In this diſguiſe, not to alarm his guilt,
Till it more full appear, and proper ſteps
To puniſh his miſgovernment be taken.
If he has ill deſigns, you, Arcas, you
Muſt, while you ſeem'd regardleſs, have diſcern'd
them.
Your calm but keen inſpection, not diſturb'd
By the vain flutter of ill-tim'd diſcourſe,
Muſt reach the very bottom of his purpoſe.
In you the king confides, of you demands,
As of his beſt-lov'd ſubject in Mycenæ,
The truth.
Arc. O, I have precious truths in ſtore!
And that beſt treaſure will unlock before him.
Long has my ſilent obſervation trac'd
Egiſthus, thro' the doubling maze of treaſon:
But now his ill deſigns are too too plain
To all Mycenæ plain; and who [illegible]
Who can [illegible] thus corrupts a people?
It was a ſervant's hard, a bitter taſk
To wink at public villainy; to wipe
Each honeſt [illegible] from my livid face,
To bind my hands, and ſeal my ſpeaking lips.
While

While my heart burn'd with rage, and treasur'd up
A storm of indignation—
Mel. Give it way!
O 'tis a glorious luxury! Oppreſt,
For years, beneath a load of wicked power,
To heave it off indignant, and aſſert
The dear dear freedom of a virtuous mind.
Curſe on the coward or perfidious tongue,
That dares not, even to kings, avow the truth!
Let traitors wrap them in deluſive incenſe,
On flattery flattery heap, on falſehood falſehood;
Truth is the living liberal breath of heaven,
That ſweeps theſe fogs away, with all their vermin.
And, on my ſoul, I think that Agamemnon
Deſerves ſome touch of blame. To put the power,
The power of bleſſing or oppreſſing *millions*,
Of doing or great good or equal miſchief,
Even into doubtful hands, is worſe than careleſs
Ye gods, avert the miſeries that hence
On him and on his family may fall!
But, ſee, the king.

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, ARCAS.

Agam. My Arcas to my boſom, [*Arcas kneeling.*
Come, let me proudly take a faithful heart!
Arc. Thrice welcome, Sir, to Argos and Mycenæ!
To virtue welcome!

Agam.

Agam. In my own dominions
I am a ſtranger, Arcas. Ten full years,
Or even one day, is abſence for a king,
Without ſome mighty reaſon, much too long.
For me a juſt and memorable war.
Whoſe actions future times perhaps may ſing,
My own, my brother's, and my people's honour,
With that of common Greece, muſt plead my pardon.
Now ſhall my cares attend the works of peace,
Calm deeds, that glare not on the vulgar eye;
And yet it equal courage oft demands,
To quell injuſtice, riot, factious rage,
Dark-working blind cabal, and bold diſorder,
As to confront the rigid face of war.
Then tell me, Arcas, for, till ſelf-inform'd,
I mean to ſee with your diſcerning eyes,
And, ſure I am, they never will miſlead me,
Have I much ſubject for this peaceful courage?
This fortitude of ſtate?

Arc. Too much, my lord.
Would to the gods, our virtues, here at home,
Could anſwer your heroic deeds abroad!
You, doubtleſs, from the rugged ſchool of war,
Have brought ſound manly hearts, and generous ſpirits:
While we, alas! we rot in weedy peace,
In ſlothful riot, luxury, profuſion,
And every meanneſs to repair that waſte—
I ſee the noble blood, indignant, mount,
At this relation, to my ſovereign's cheek:
But as affairs now preſs, I were a traitor,
If, with a ſparing tongue, I ſpoke the truth

Agam.

Agam. Immortal gods! have I, this ten long years
Sustain'd a war at Troy; fill'd every day
With cares incessant, councils, dangers, toils,
To cherish villains in licentious ease?
Have I thus squander'd vile, on Phrygian plains,
The bravest blood of Greece to shelter such;
And to assert their honour who have none?
But what can this perfidious, this Egisthus,
What can he, say, by such loose rule propose?
Is it his native bent? Or does he push
Some dark design, by these detested means?

Arc. There is no vice a stranger to his heart,
Conceal'd beneath refin'd dissimulation;
Dissimulation, that on you yourself
Impos'd. Meantime, Sir, his outrageous views
Invade the throne of Argos and Mycenæ.

Agam. Said you the throne of Argos and Mycenæ?
Already have I lost my noblest throne,
If he has robb'd me of my people's virtue;
'Tis but vain pomp, a tyrant's toy, the other.
And dares he bear a giddy look so high,
As to my throne? The villain! sure he dares not.

Arc. Nay, more, my lord—He scales the dazzling height,
And almost grasps with impious hand your sceptre.

Agam. To touch it is perdition!—What! Egisthus!
Egisthus seize my throne!

Arc. So means the traitor.

Agam. That creature of my power! that infect! rais'd

By

By the warm beams of my mistaken bounty!
Whom, when my father's vengeance raz'd his race,
I sav'd, train'd up, with favours, honours heap'd;
And trusted in his hands at last a jewel,
Too precious for the faithless heart of man—
O gross gross blindness!—Half my kingly power!
Ay, there breaks out his father's treacherous blood!
There, there, too late, I find the base Thyestes!
Forgive me, Atreus! Oh my royal father!
Forgive me trusting thus the seed of him,
Of an abhorr'd, an execrable brother,
Who even profan'd thy bed—But, ere yon orb
Shall from the purpled ocean rise again,
Oh injur'd Atreus! by thy sacred shade
I swear, to make for this a full atonement.
Is then this people, Areas, grown so vile,
So very vile, that he dares entertain
The smallest hope to rival me in empire?
I like not vaunting—But, ungrateful people!
Can you prefer a [illegible]less thing to me?
Am I not rough with [illegible] on your account?
And for the careful [illegible] I always bore you,
Your father nam'd! And yet prefer to me,
One who ne'er saw the glorious front of war,
For nothing famous but corrupting peace,
And whose sole merit was my ill-judg'd favour?
Can you?--away!--Dishonour stains the thought!
How should this be?
Arc. Not many, sir, stand fix'd
On the deep principles of reason'd virtue,

Whom

Whom time nor ſteals, nor paſſions bears away,
Mankind, in general, float along the ſtream
Of cuſtom, good or bad; and oft the mind
To that familiar grows, by gradual uſe
And ſtill-encroaching vice, whoſe firſt regard
Gave horror. Hence, ten looſely-govern'd years
Have wrought ſuch ſtrange events, that you no more
Behold your ancient Argos and Mycenæ.
Theſe cities now with ſlaves and villain's ſwarm.
At firſt Egiſthus, popular and fair,
All ſmiles and ſoftneſs, as if each man's friend,
By hidden ways proceeded, mining virtue:
He pride, he pomp, he luxury diffus'd;
He taught them wants, beyond their private means:
And ſtrait, in bounty's pleaſing chains involv'd,
They grew his ſlaves. Who cannot live on little,
Or as his various fortunes ſhall permit,
Stands in the market ready to be ſold.

Agam. O damn'd deteſted traffic!—But proceed.

Arc. While the luxurious fever thus increas'd,
Still, in proportion as it [illegible]'d rage,
He lent it fewel; and, [illegible] child, diſclos'd
His noon-day treaſon. Murmurs went about,
And ſpread at laſt into the common talk,
That you was proud, [illegible], beneath the notion
Of holding firm the helm of ſtate, a tyrant;
That in vain wars, which nought imported them,
You ſpent their treaſure, ſhed their nobleſt blood;
And that, Troy conquer'd once, to her rich plains
You meant from Argos to tranſplant your empire.

Mean

Mean-time, in private, all, whom wild debauch
Has ſet adrift from every human tie;
Whom riot, want, and conſcious guilt inflame,
Holding the gods and virtue in contempt,
Amidſt their bowls; ſuch are his boſom-friends;
And, join'd to them a meaner ruffian band,
Of villains bold in crimes, whoſe trade is murder,
Hang in black clouds around him; whence, I fear,
A ſudden tempeſt is prepar'd to burſt.
This, ſir, from duty and a faithful zeal,
I plain unfold: nor on my word, alone,
Believe theſe accuſations; clear as day,
I for them will produce the ſtrongeſt proof.

Agam. I thank thee, Arcas. Truth, tho' ſometimes clad
In painful luſtre, yet is always welcome,
Dear as the light that ſhews the lurking rock:
'Tis the fair ſtar that, ne'er into the main
Deſcending, leads us ſafe thro' ſtormy life—
Gods! how it tears me from each calmer thought!
To think this traitor, that this double traitor,
This traitor to myſelf and to my people,
Should, by ſuch ſneaking, ſuch unmanly ways,
Thus filch away my crown!—
Why ſtand I chaſing here? One timely deed
Is worth ten thouſand words—Come then, my friends,
Come and behold me ſeize amidſt his guards,
His coward guards—Guilt ever was a coward—
This rival-king, and with his crown my triumph.
Till then Troy ſmoke in ruin, and Agamemnon
Cannot be ſaid to conquer.

Mel.

Mel. Sir, beware——

Agam. Of what beware? Where am I, Meliſander? Am I not in Mycenæ? in my palace? Are not theſe crowds, that ſtream along the ſtreets, My ſubjects all? Of what ſhould I beware? Not ſeize a traitor in my own dominions? Yes, I will ſeize him, Meliſander,—will!

Mel. What grace to kings ſuch generous ardor gives! But tho' brave deeds be warm at firſt conceiv'd, Let the beſt purpoſe cool, nor miſs your blow. More firm and ſure the hand of courage ſtrikes, When it obeys the watchful eye of caution. You hear from Arcas, ſir, what ruffian bands, What ſecret deaths, what daggers lurk around him; Be cautious then; for virtue's, glory's ſake! And, when you ſtrike, ſtrike home.

Agam. O for thoſe Greeks! That this rude day are toſſing on the ſeas; Thoſe hardy Greeks, whom ten years war has ſteel'd; With toils, with dangers, and with death familiar; Then ſhould you ſee what chaff before the wind Are theſe weak ſons of faſt enfeebling peace, Theſe wretches, only bold where unreſiſted.

Mel. But ſince, my lord, you cannot now exert This nobler force, let prudence take its place. Have patience only, till you ſafely can, And ſurely, ſeize him.

Agam. Well, till then I will. And, tho' not made of patient mold, in this

I will have patience, will, ſome tedious hours,
Repreſs my vengeance——— [*Pauſing.*
Yes, I like the thought—
He may be ſeiz'd this evening at the banquet,
Be there ſurpris'd with eaſe—and ſhall!—
For, by th' eternal gods that rule mankind!
The ſleep of death alone ſhall ſeal theſe eyes,
While ſuch a wretch holds power in my dominions.
Oh Clytemneſtra! to the public, now,
Succeeds the private pang.—At thought of thee,
New rage, new vengeance ſhake my inmoſt ſoul!
Was my belov'd, my queen, my Clytemneſtra,
So long abandon'd in a villain's power,
Who knows, it ſeems, no limits, owns no laws,
Save thoſe one vice impoſes on another?
And now the ſecret cauſe, I fear, is plain,
Of that unuſual damp, that ſtrange dejection,
Which clouded her at meeting. Still the more
I pour'd my fondneſs, ſtill the more diſtreſs'd
She ſeem'd; and, turning from my tender gaze,
The copious ſhower ſtole down her troubled cheek;
As if ſhe pity'd thoſe my blind endearments,
And in her breaſt ſome horrid ſecret ſwell'd—
Should it be ſo—Confuſion!—Can I ſtoop
Even to ſuppoſe it!—How from ſlight miſtakes
Great evils ſpring! But the moſt fruitful ſource
Of every evil—O that I, in thunder,
Could ſound it o'er the liſt'ning earth to kings—
Is delegating power to wicked hands.

Mel. My lord, let no ſuſpicions of the queen
E'er taint your boſom: if I judge aright—

Agam.

Agam. No, Meliſander, no; I am not jealous;
In me that paſſion and contempt were one;
No, 'tis her ſituation gives me horror,
Her dreadful ſituation!—But of this
Enough—then tell me, Arcas, tell me truly;
Are there a few! ſay, do there yet remain
A faithful few! to ſave the ſinking ſtate?
Can you, ere night, collect an honeſt band,
A band of ſuch as worthy are to reſcue
Their king and country from impending fate?
Ah! little thought I, that amidſt my ſubjects,
Emboſom'd ſweet in peace, I like a tyrant,
Should e'er have needed guards.

Arc. Yes, ſir, I know
A band of generous youths, whom native virtue,
Unbroken yet by avarice or profuſion,
Fits for our purpoſe: Theſe I can collect—

Agam. About it quickly, Arcas; loſe no time:
Go, bring me to the banquet thoſe brave youths:
I long for their acquaintance. 'Till that hour,
Domeſtic cares and joys demand my preſence:
The father's heart now bears me to my children.
Farewell! My all depends upon your conduct.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON MELISANDER.

Agam. DOmeſtic pleaſures ſpread their charms in vain—
O for the hour of vengeance! I, till then,
But ſtalk about, the ſhadow of a king.
Heard you from Arcas aught?
Mel. Be patient, ſir.
As yet the time permits not his return,
Arcas is zealous, ardent in your ſervice,
And will not fail his duty.

[*Enter an officer belonging to the court.*

OFFICER.

Sir, Caſſandra
Is juſt arriv'd.
Agam. Conduct the princeſs hither.
This Priam's faireſt daughter, Meliſander,
In a young princeſs of engaging beauty,
Rais'd by diſtreſs, of noble ſenſe and ſpirit,
But, by poetic viſions led aſtray,
She dreamt Apollo lov'd her, and the gift
Of prophecy beſtow'd, to gain her promiſe:
The gift once her's, the chaſtly-honeſt maid

Deceiv'd the god; who therefore, in revenge,
Since he could not recall it, made it uſeleſs,
For ever doom'd to meet with diſregard.
E'er ſince the lovely viſionary raves
With dignity; foretels the fate of nations;
And judging of the future from the paſt,
Has oft been wondrous happy in her gueſſes.
Some ſtrange, ſome recent inſtances of this,
Confirm her in her venerable madneſs.

Mel. Be not too raſh in judging, Agamemnon;
For we, blind mortals, but a little know
Of boundleſs nature--Hark! the princeſs comes;
I hear her voice, I hear the voice of ſorrow.

SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, CASSANDRA, *attended by* Trojan *captives*.

CASSANDRA *entering*.

O hoſtile roofs! O Ilium, O my country!

Agam. I cannot blame your grief, unhappy princeſs.
But, if it can relieve you, here be ſure
Of an aſylum, ſafe as Priam's palace.

Caſ. O ſweet abode! O palace of my fathers!
My bleeding heart melts while I think of thee;
Think of the days of innocence and joy,
That ſhone upon me there. How chang'd art thou!
Ah! what a ſcene, when I behold thee laſt!

Rage, blood, and flames, and shrieks of murder
round me!
The sword of Pyrrhus, and a feeble father!
Where was you Hector then? Where all his sons?
O Priam's numerous race! what are you now
Become! Ah me! the desolating gods
Have laid their hands, their iron hands, upon us.
Agam. From past misfortunes, princess, turn
your eye——
Cas. 'Tis true, the future may full well suffice.
Th' avenging sisters trace my footsteps still,
The hunters still pursue the trembling doe.
Where am I?--Gods!--Black heavy drops of blood
Run down the guilty walls—With the dun shades
Of night ascending, lo! successive troops
Of Trojan ghosts are flocking to the banquet:
Permitted by th' infernal gods, they come,
To feast them with the horrors of this night,
To snuff the blood of victims—Ha! the car,
The gay triumphal car, is turn'd, at once,
Into a mournful bier, that nods along,
Solemn and slow—Yes, Troy shall be aveng'd.
I shall the vengeance see; and yet not see
Thy light, returning Phœbus.
Agam. Fair Cassandra,
Indulge no more these melancholy views,
These visions form'd by gloomy pain and grief.
We will each art, each tender care employ,
To sooth your sorrows, to restore your peace.
You come not to the proud unfeeling race
Of yesterday: we know the turns of fortune;
Have drunk the cup, the wholesome cup of [illegible]
Thus

That not inflames, but moderates the mind.
Then fear not, princeſs; let me call you daughter.
Your treatment ſhall be ſuch as well becomes
The dignity of wo, becomes the great,
The fair unhappy. Nought ſhall touch your honour.
I know, I ſee your beauty: but here dwell
The gods of hoſpitality and faith;
The hymeneal powers are honour'd here.
Yes, I will ſhield thee, equal with Electra,
With my lov'd daughter in thy friendſhip bleſt.

Caſ. In ſpite of ſwelling tears that choke the way,
Of bitter tears by big remembrance ſhed,
I own thy goodneſs, thank thee, Agamemnon.
Mean-time, in vain are all thy generous cares
On my account. The gods of death will, ſoon,
Extend o'er me their all-protecting wing.
I ſhall not long, I ſhall not want protection:
But, who, devoted prince, will give it thee?
Even while we talk, the ſecret wheels are turning,
That lift the vile, and lay the mighty low.
I pity thee, the houſe of Pelops pity:
Forgive me, Troy; I pity thy deſtroyers.

Enter an officer.

OFFICER.

A meſſenger from Argos, Sir,—

Agam. 'Tis well.
To my apartment take him—you, mean while,
[*To Meliſander.*
Attend the princeſs; grace her with ſuch honours,
As ſuits her to receive, and me to give.

SCENE

SCENE III.

CASSANDRA, CHORUS *of* Trojan *Captives*, MELISANDER.

Mel. Fair princeſs, ſtop theſe tears. Exert that beſt,
That nobleſt virtue, which can maſter fortune,
An equal mind.
Caſ. Not for myſelf I weep!—
But, oh my dear companions! How for you
My boſom yearns!
Chor. We have together liv'd!
Together let us die!
Caſ. Together liv'd!
At this ten thouſand images awake:
Ten thouſand little tenderneſſes throb.
Chor. O days of youth! O careleſs days! untaught
To weep, if love ſhed not the pleaſing tear.
Caſ. O woods! O fountains! O delightful meads!
That lent us flowers, the prime of blooming May,
To deck our treſſes.
Chor. O the yellow banks
Of fair Scamander! in whoſe ſilver ſtream
We us'd to bathe, beneath the ſecret ſhade.
Caſ. O chearful lea, airy ſummit, where
The gods delight to dwell.
Chor. O ſilent Troy!
Whoſe ſtreets have often echo'd with our ſong

Caſ.

Caſ. O the loſt labours of a ruin'd people!
O country! freedom! friends! relations! All,
That gives or taſte or dignity to life,
All, all is gone, beyond recovery gone!
Chor. Then let us die!
Caſ. For me, the hunted hart
More fervent pants not for the cooling ſtream,
Than I to wrap me in the quiet ſhades
Of death. But, ah! my helpleſs friends, for you
I feel its keeneſt anguiſh.
Chor. Not for us,
Feel not for us. What comfort have we left!
What hope, what wiſh in life?—One healing pang,
And then we weep no more.
Caſ. Refreſhing thought!
And then from bondage, pain, and every ill,
For ever free, we meet our friends again;
Our parents, brothers, ſiſters, lovers meet.
Chor. Then let us die! and ſudden be the blow!
Caſ. The gods aſſent.—Behold the happy ſhore!
But, ah! there lies a ſtormy ſea betwixt!
Mel. So ſings the plaining nightingale her woes.
Caſ. Ah, far unlike the nightingale!—She ſings,
Unceaſing, thro' the balmy nights of May;
She ſings from love and joy, while we, alas!—
Mel. Behold the queen.—Deep-wrap'd in thought
ſhe ſeems.
Caſ. O diverſe muſings!—Lead us from her pre-
ſence.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sweet peace of mind! whence pleaſure borrows taſte,
Daughter of virtue! whither art thou fled?
To what calm cottage, to what blameleſs ſhade,
Far from theſe guilty walls? O walls! O race!
To horrors doom'd!—Before me gathers faſt
A deep'ning gloom, with unknown terrors big.—
Not quite unknown.—Gods! what a dreadful hint
Flaſh'd from Egiſthus, when I ſaw him laſt!
And to what deſperate actions cannot ſafety,
Ambition, love, and vengeance, drive the ſoul!—
Diſtraction lies that way—yet, how eſcape?
Shame urges on behind, unpitying ſhame,
That worſt of furies, whoſe fell aſpect frights
Each tender feeling from the human breaſt.
Goodneſs itſelf even turns in me to gall,
And only ſerves to heighten my deſpair.
How kind was Agamemnon! generous! fond!
How more than uſual mild! As if, on purpoſe,
To give theſe tortures their ſevereſt ſting.
Happy! compar'd to this tormented ſtate,
Where honour only lives with inward laſh,
To puniſh guilt, happy the harden'd wretch,
Who feels no conſcience, and who fears no crime!—
Oh horrid! horrid! Oh hagitious thought!
How is it with the mind that can endure
A thought ſo dire!—My ſole remaining hope

Is

Is death, kind death, that amiable ſleep,
Which wakes no more,--at leaſt to mortal care--
But then the dark Hereafter that may come.--
There is no anchor that againſt this ſtorm,
This mighty ſea of doubts and fears, can hold.
Hopeleſs, I drive.--One thought deſtroys another.--
This ſtranger too! Should it be Meliſander---
Is there a fear, however idle, wild,
And even almoſt impoſſible, which guilt,
The feeble-hearted guilt not entertains?--
I order'd his attendance --See, he comes.

SCENE V.

CLYTEMNESTRA, MELISANDER.

Clyt. Stranger, are you not he, whom Agamemnon,
By an amazing chance, in his return,
Sav'd from a deſert iſle?
Mel. Madam, the ſame.
Clyt. I much admire your fortunate deliverance,
And wiſh to hear your ſtory: what there left,
And how ſuſtain'd. Indulge me with it, ſtranger.
Mel. Madam, I come this moment from the king,
Charg'd with a matter which requires dispatch.
But, that tranſacted once, without delay,
I will attend your orders.
Clyt. Then it ſeems,
You are not quite a ſtranger in Mycenæ.
What is your country.

Mel. Greece.

Clyt. What part of Greece?

Mel. At Athens I was born.

Clyt. But in Mycenæ,
Have you not in Mycenæ been before?

Mel. There are not, madam, many parts of Greece
To me unknown.

Clyt. Why thus avoid my queſtion?---
Have you been here before?

Mel. Madam, I have.

Clyt. Here in this palace?---Ha! why ſtand you
ſilent?
You keep your eyes unmov'd upon the ground.
What ſhould this mean? Beneath that rough diſguiſe
There lurks, methinks, a form, which ſomewhere I
Have ſeen.

Mel. The dream of fancy, that the more
[illegible] perplexes ſtill the more.
I tarry here too long; the king's command
Admit of no delay.

Clyt. Tis ſo! 'tis ſo!
Air, feature, manner, voice, this ſtudy'd diſguiſe,
The ſhifts of one unpractis'd in deceit,
All all conſpire--On image wakes another,
And thick they fall upon me!
Mel. You grow pale,
[illegible]emble, madam; the miſtake, I find,
[illegible]ing me turn wilder, and diſturbs you.
[illegible]ire---
[illegible]oment---ſtay---
[illegible]in.

I find

I find it is in vain to wrap me longer
In theſe evaſions.
Clyt. Meliſander!
Mel. Madam—
Clyt. And can it be? Behold I then the man,
Whom I ſo long have number'd with the dead?
Almighty gods! Behold I Meliſander?
But, ah! how chang'd! how darken'd with ſuſpicion!
Yes I am deem'd the author of his woes.
Mel. Madam, forgive—
Clyt. Why elſe from me conceal
Your wiſh'd return—I plainly am diſtruſted—
By Agamemnon too—It was unkind,
Unjuſt, unfriendly, ſhocks me, Meliſander.
Mel. Indeed you wrong me, madam, wrong me much,
To judge me apt or to conceive or ſpread
Diſtruſt. I would have periſh'd by myſelf,
Unknown, unwept, in helpleſs ſolitude,
Rather than here return to this full world,
To ſee my miſtreſs and her lord at variance.
O think me not a buſy peace-deſtroyer!
Accurſed is the wretch, to ſocial life
The moſt inhuman foe, who in the nice,
The tender ſcenes of life, dares raſhly meddle,
And ſow diviſion between friends and lovers.
Clyt. The generous heart is ever ſlow to blame;
But, Meliſander, not to me were owing,
Not in the leaſt to me, thoſe cruel woes,
This worſe than death, which you ſo long have ſuffer'd.

Instead of that, your fate, how, whither gone,
If carry'd off, or secretly destroy'd,
Was all a mournful mystery to me,
Dark as the night on which you disappear'd,
Did you but know, here in my secret soul,
What undissembled pangs your absence rouz'd,
What I have felt for you and for myself,
In losing such a wife and faithful friend;
Knew you but these, O knew you, Melisander,
How your disaster has been truly mine,
You never could suspect me.

Mel. Witness heav'n!
I never did—Your heart I know disdains,
A thought that looks like cruelty or fraud.
From the first moment that his ruffians seiz'd me,
I had no doubt. I knew it was Egisthus.
Some time before I mark'd the rising storm,
And means to warn you, but it sudden burst,
And bore me far away, far from all means,
Even from all hope of lending you assistance.
Ay! there I suffer'd most. My fears for you,
At once by guile and violence beset,
Took off the point of my own proper woes.
But when your awful virtues struck my thought,
Your wisdom, spirit, resolution, truth;
That dread effulgence of the spotless soul,
Which smites the hard'ned villain into shame;
My fears appear'd impertinent and vain.
Yet doubtless, madam, you have had occasion
For a firm ruling hand and watchful eye,
For every virtue; and I truly joy,

That

That Agamemnon finds at his return
Egiſthus by your conduct thus reſtrain'd.
Clyt. By heavens! he tries me.--O ſuſpicious guilt!
[*Aſide.*
Your words are friendly, but your deeds are doubtful.
No, Meliſander, friendſhip with diſtruſt
Can never dwell. And that I am diſtruſted
To me is certain--In a matter too,
That much concern'd my peace, concern'd my honour.
For did you even aſcribe your woes to me,
You could not manage with more diſtant caution.
Mel. Whence is it that the noble Clytemneſtra,
Who us'd to ſhine in a ſuperior ſphere
Of fair ſerenity and candid peace,
Should to theſe doubts deſcend, theſe dark ſuſpicions?
For me, I here atteſt the gods, my ſoul
Ne'er knew a thought, that ſwell'd not with eſteem,
With love, and veneration of your virtues.
And for the king, no young enraptur'd lover,
In all the firſt effuſions of his ſoul,
New to the mighty charm; no friend, who meets,
After long years of dark and ſilent abſence,
His happy friend again, feels livelier joy,
Than Agamemnon feels, while his glad tongue
Runs out in endleſs praiſe of Clytemneſtra--
But I muſt wait his orders.--
Clyt. Do your duty.
I too muſt go, muſt to Egiſthus ſtrait. [*Aſide.*
Impart this dreadful news.

SCENE VI.

MELISANDER, *alone.*

She went abruptly—
And as we talk'd, methought, ſtrange paſſions ſhook
Her inward frame, and darken'd every feature.
Behold the black, the guilt-concealing night,
Faſt cloſes round. Wide, thro' this ample palace,
The lamps begin to ſhine. The tempeſt falls;
The weary winds ſink, breathleſs. But, who knows,
What fiercer tempeſt yet may ſhake this night.
Soul-chearing Phœbus, with thy ſacred beams
O quickly come, and chaſe theſe ſullen ſhadows.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

Egiſt. AH Clytemneſtra! what a change is here!
And muſt I then thus ſteal an interview?
Are we alone?
Clyt. You fright me with that queſtion:
You look aſtoniſh'd.
Egiſt. On the brink of ruin
We, tottering, ſtand.
Clyt. That is no news to me.
Egiſt. But——
Clyt. What?
Egiſt. We are diſcover'd.
Clyt. Ha! diſcover'd!
Egiſt. Yes, certainly diſcover'd. Arcas now,
By Agamemnon's orders, in the city
Collects a band, to ſeize me at a banquet,
A ſhort hour hence. And my accuſers, madam,
You may be well aſſur'd are not your friends.
Clyt. 'Tis plain! 'tis plain! The parting fogs diſperſe:
And now the doubtful ſcene ſtands all reveal'd—
Who could have thought they ſhould diſſemble thus?
But I can tell you more.

Egiſt. What, madam? ſpeak;
For danger preſſes on us.
Clyt. Saw you him,
This ſeeming ſtranger, ſav'd by Agamemnon?
Egiſt. Arcas and he to-day, my friends inform me,
Were buſy with the king; and doubtleſs, then,
It was concerted that I ſhould be ſeiz'd.
Clyt. Ah! did you know, Egiſthus, who he is!—
Egiſt. Who?
Clyt. Meliſander.
Egiſt. Gods! and does he live?
For my confuſion ſav'd! O groſs, groſs folly,
To do an action of that kind by halves.
Had he been ſilent duſt—To pleaſe you, madam,
From a falſe tenderneſs for you, he lives—
Clyt. A mighty merit! glorious boaſt indeed!
Hear him, ye gracious gentle powers of love!
From tenderneſs for me, he did not murder
A worthy blameleſs man, who never hurt him;
He murder'd not my friend, my faithful friend.
Ah! 'tis ſuch tenderneſs, that makes me wretched;
Such tenderneſs, that ſtill in blacker guilt,
In the laſt depth of miſery will plunge me.
Egiſt. It is not, madam, now a time for this.
Think of our ſituation: cloſe beſet
By all thoſe ills which mortals moſt abhor,
Whom have we to confide in but each other?
And this ſad meeting is perhaps our laſt.
Concord alone, and vigorous meaſures, can
Prevent our ruin—But, fr[illegible] Meliſander,
What did you learn? Are you yourſelf ſuſpected?

Clyt.

Clyt. I cannot find I am:—And yet I muſt.
Egiſt. But, as for me, my ruin is no ſecret.
Clyt. 'Tis true, ſome dark attempt goes on againſt you.
Egiſt. Then have I rightly done.
Clyt. What have you done.
Egiſt. What prudence, juſtice, love and vengeance, all
Demand——
Clyt. Immortal powers! you have not?—
Egiſt. No:
But muſt, and will—What elſe can you propoſe?
Clyt. Oh, any thing beſides! immediate flight,
Eternal abſence, death!
Egiſt. Let others die!
Let the proud, faithleſs, falſe, injurious tyrant;
The hero glorious in his daughter's murder;
The ſcourge of Greece, who has, from wild ambition,
Shed ſo much blood—let Agamemnon die!
Clyt. Oh heavens and earth! you ſhock me to diſtraction!
I have, Egiſthus, hitherto avoided
This dreadful point, ſtill hoping you might drop
Your horrid reſolution: now I tell you,
Before the liſtening gods, I plainly tell you,
That Agamemnon ſhall not fall unwarn'd;
You ſhall not riſe by me into his throne:
I will not be the tool of your ambition:
Will not be wretched, infamous for ever;
The bluſh of women, the diſgrace of nature!

That

That you may gain your execrable views,
Maſk'd under ſmooth pretences.—I am guilty;
Alas! I am--But think not therefore tyrant!
To give me law. There are degrees in guilt;
And I have ſtill my reaſon left, have left
Some reſolution, ſome remains of virtue:
Yes, I dare die; and who dares die, Egiſthus,
Needs not be driven to villainous extremes!
Mark me, inſulting man!---My certain cure
Of every wo, my cordial draught is ready;
And if you do not promiſe me, here ſwear,
To drop your fell deſigns on Agamemnon,
To quit this palace--You may ſtill eſcape---
And never ſee me more; I go, I go,
This moment to diſcover all and die!

Egiſt. What! Clytemneſtra!

Clyt. Nothing ſhall diſſuade me.
I will not argue more---Say, only ſay,
Muſt I betake me to this cruel refuge?
This dire neceſſity?

Egiſt. Permit me, madam;
Hear me but once, and then purſue your purpoſe.
Suppoſe us guilty, what you will;--yet, madam,
Shall we acknowledge and proclaim that guilt?
Shall we, by patient waiting for our doom,
By pitiful neglect of ſelf-defence,
Unheard-of meanneſs! ſtamp it into ſhame?
No; let us wipe it out with bold ſucceſs.
It is ſucceſs that colours all in life;
Succeſs make fools admir'd, makes villains honeſt;
All the proud virtue of this vaunting world
Fawns on ſucceſs, and power, howe'er acquir'd.

If

If then, ſuppoſing guilt, it were a meanneſs
To ſtoop to ſhame, can words expreſs the madneſs
Of ſtopping ſhort with infamy and ruin,
When juſtice, love, and vengeance, urge to glory?
Inſtead of being deem'd a generous queen,
The brave avenger of her ſex's honour,
Fam'd for her ſpirit, for her juſt reſentment;
Who greatly puniſh'd a perfidious huſband,
A cruel tyrant; one, who, from his bed,
His throne, propos'd, with open ſhame, to turn her,
And to her place to take her country's foe,
To take a Trojan captive, proud Caſſandra:
Inſtead of ſuch renown, can Clytemneſtra---
Forgive the doubt--can ſhe ſubmit to paſs,
Thro' future times, for an abandon'd woman?
A feeble, ſpiritleſs, abandon'd woman!--
Nay, madam, hear the truth: What now I tell you
Muſt, in a little ſcanty hour, take place
In a few moments, you muſt be the firſt
Or laſt of women; be the public ſcorn,
Or admiration of approving Greece—
You know you muſt;--be Agamemnon's ſlave,
Caſſandra's ſlave, or nobly puniſh both,
And reign with me in happineſs and glory.
Conſult your heart; can you reſolve on ſhame?
On voluntary ſhame? That only ill
The generous fear, which kills the ſoul itſelf.
Where thoſe fair features, full of lovely grandeur,
Form'd for confuſion? That majeſtic front,
To be bow'd down with infamy and vileneſs?
Ah! can you bear contempt? The venom'd tongue

Of

Of thoſe whom ruin pleaſes? The keen ſneer,
The lewd reproaches of the raſcal herd;
Who for the ſelf-ſame actions, if ſucceſsful,
Would be as groſsly laviſh in your praiſe?--
To ſum up all in one--Can you ſupport
The ſcornful glances, the malignant joy,
Or more deteſted pity of a rival?
Of a triumphant rival?---No; you cannot.
That conſcious worth, which kindles in your eye,
Tells me you cannot ---
But in vain diſputes
No more to ſquander theſe important moments:
Know, that I have not, to the frail deciſion
Of wav'ring fear and female weakneſs left
Our freedom, ſafety, happineſs, and honour.
Even in your own deſpite, you ſhall be ſav'd.
And could you be ſo loſt to reaſon, wild,
To do what woman never did before,
What ſhocks humanity, accuſe yourſelf;
You only court diſhonour to no purpoſe:
For Agamemnon now cannot eſcape;
I am already maſter of this palace;
All is prepar'd, my people all are fix'd,
All properly diſpos'd; and here I ſwear,
By ſacred juſtice, glory, love, and vengeance!
He dies!---dies in the bath, before the banquet!--
And with him dies Caſſandra, ſhe, who dares,
In her preſumptuous thought, uſurp thy honours.
She weeps!---O my ador'd! my Clytemneſtra!
Forgive this barbarous neceſſary truth!
Did I not love thee, love thee more than empire,

Than

Than life, and glory, would I thus diſcloſe
Theſe dangerous ſecrets? Could I not have veil'd,
And, with more certain caution, gain'd my purpoſe?

Clyt. Oh that you had, Egiſthus! then, alas!
I ſhould have fondly thought myſelf leſs guilty.

Egiſt. I loſe myſelf in ſoftneſs, while the time,
With danger big, demands intrepid deeds.
Wipe off theſe tears--When next we weep again,
All will be well.

SCENE II.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah! when we meet again!--
I ſtand, at laſt, convinc'd, and muſt diſſemble--
Yet how diſſemble? Painted, in my face,
Are the full horrors of this bloody deed.--
But who are theſe approaching?--Ha!--Caſſandra!
How fair ſhe ſeems! how lovely! hateful charms!
That well may rival mine, decay'd, and ſunk
By guilt and ſorrow--She poſſeſs my bed!
Poſſeſs my ſceptre!--This reſtores my ſpirit;--
I am abus'd! too patient! periſh all!
Periſh myſelf, Egiſthus, Agamemnon!
So this proud rival, this Caſſandra periſh!

SCENE

SCENE III.

CASSANDRA, Trojan *Captives*, MELISANDER.

Mel. Daughters of Ilium! By the king's command,
I come to aſk your preſence at the banquet.
Till then allow me to partake your woes;
I have a reverence for them. I myſelf,
Thanks to the gracious gods! have known misfortune:
I am with grief acquainted; therefore can
For others feel. Sweet ſource of every virtue,
O ſacred ſorrow! He who knows not thee,
Knows not the beſt emotions of the heart,
Thoſe tender tears that humanize the ſoul,
The ſigh that charms, the pang that gives delight;
He dwells too near to cruelty and pride,
And is a novice in the ſchool of virtue.

Caſ. We thank thee, ſtranger, for thy generous pity,
Heaven has, it ſeems, throughout diffus'd the good.
May the kind gods, the hoſpitable powers,
For this befriend thee! Thou muſt wander ſtill,
Wilt their protection want.—But Agamemnon
Where is the king?

Mel. He bathes him for the banquet,
The banquet call'd by ten years war and toil.

Caſ. Short-ſighted man to dream of feſtal joy,
When

When his next banquet is perhaps with Pluto.
He comes! the god comes rushing on my soul!
O gently sooth me with the voice of music!
Assuage my pangs with harmony!--Methinks,
I hear Apollo's lyre.
Mel. Mysterious powers!
Cas. 'Tis gone--And now harsh discord takes its place:
Dire yellings now affright my trembling ear.
What means this uproar of the howling forest?
The lioness and wolf, together leagu'd,
Pursue the lion's life.—Behold! the snare,
Th' infernal snare is set, spread by the stream,
Where, unsuspecting harm, he bathes at noon.
Soon will these guiltless waters blush with blood.
Mel. There is a sort of gloomy light in this,
That flashes horror on me.
Cas. A black swarm
Of fell ideas seize my fancy.—Hence!
O snatch me from this palace! shambles rather!
It smells of carnage; breathes a hideous steam,
As if from gaping sepulchres exhal'd.
And, lo! the spotless loves, the sports, the joys,
The weeping Lares fly: while in their place,
The vices all, the raging Furies come;
And with them Comus, the flush'd god of banquets,
Besmear'd with gore.--They sing the funeral hymn--
What do I see? What mean these mangled forms?
These pale, these nightly phantoms; such as rise,
To working fancy's eye, in troubled dreams?—
See! where they sit for ever at the gates,

Demanding vengeance--Vengeance is at hand——
Ha! 'tis the murder'd boys, whose limbs were here
Serv'd up to their own fire, to be devour'd!--
Mel. She wakes my dread--The story of Thyestes!
Caſ. With this devoted race involv'd I fall:
Nor falls the ſlave alone. The maſter falls.
But man ſhall die for man, for woman woman:
Remember this.
Mel. The ſlave, the maſter fall!
Caſ. Ah boſom-traitreſs! Ill-perſuaded queen!
And canſt thou then the barbarous ſecret keep?--
Mel. What queen? what ſecret? Speak more plain, Caſſandra!
Caſ. From guilt, in vain, to greater guilt you fly,
From crime to crime precipitated--No!
The wicked find no peace--Diſtraction waits thee!--
One effort more--Yes, ſave thy lord, and die--
That throw belong'd to virtue--Cannot then
The gentle powers prevail?--A moment yet,
The doubtful balance yet allows a moment—
Down, down it goes, for vengeance and for Troy!
But ah! ſuch vengeance, as even foes themſelves
Abhor to ſee!
Mel. She ſtaggers all my reaſon.
Unveil theſe dreadful oracles—Perhaps—
Caſ. Yes, in a moment, they will be too plain.
The moment comes! the rapture kindles on!
Ha! Now!
Mel Unuſual horror creeps—
Caſ. Alas!
Keep from the murderous ſacrificer's hand,
O keep the victim bull! Lo! ſcar'd, he ſpurns,

He

He foams in vain--Behold the lifted blow!
Behold the thirſty ſteel!--They ſtrike him!--Hark!
What diſmal echoes run from room to room!

Mel. I heard a diſtant noiſe!--

[*The noiſe of Agamemnon's aſſaſſination heard indiſtinctly, and at a diſtance, behind the ſcenes.*

Caſ. Again!--They ſtrive,
Th' aſſaſſins labour who ſhall wound him moſt.
'Tis done!--He falls!

AGAMEMNON, *behind the ſcenes.*

[*The noiſe heard diſtinctly, and near.*

Off! villains! cowards! off!--
By villains murder'd!--Oh!

Mel. Great gods! the king!——

SCENE IV.

MELISANDER, CASSANDRA, Trojan *captives*, ELECTRA, ORESTES.

Elec. Stop, generous ſtranger! Agamemnon's friend!

Mel. What would Electra? what with Meliſander?

Elec. Heavens! Meliſander!

Mel. To the king's aſſiſtance
I fly; detain me not.

Elec. He is no more!--

Mel. Ha! dead!

Elec. Yes, murder'd by Egiſthus! dead!
Pierc'd with a thouſand wounds! O horror! horror!—
We have not time for grief—Oreſtes—Quick!
Fly! ſave my brother!
Oreſt. Leave my father!—No!
It is but once that I have ever ſeen him,
Shall I no more?
Elec. But to revenge his death,
O fly, Oreſtes, for that glorious purpoſe!
Tremendous gods! Methinks, I ſee his ghoſt,
That beckons you away!
Oreſt. I come! I come!
On Meliſander——
Elec. Brother!
Oreſt. Oh, my ſiſter!
What will become of thee?
Elec. Good Meliſander,
[illegible] my brother! ſave our only hope!—
I heard a noiſe——Farewell!

ORESTES, *going.*

Ah! poor Electra!

SCENE V.

ELECTRA, CASSANDRA, *a Trojan captive.*

Elec. The murderers come! ſtain'd with my father's blood.
Hide me, Caſſandra, hide me from a ſight
I cannot bear, a ſcene to nature ſhocking!

SCENE

SCENE VI.

The back-ſcene opening diſcovers, at a diſtance, Agamemnon's body. Electra throws herſelf by it.

CASSANDRA, Trojan *captives*, EGISTHUS *with ſome of his party.*

Egiſt. Enough, my friends!—How low, how ſilent, now,
The mighty boaſter lies!—Another blow
Crowns my revenge.—
Caſ. It ſhall not, baſe aſſaſſin!
The gods are juſt; amidſt the crimes of men,
Are firmly juſt, ſupremely wiſe and good:
The gods are here, in all their terrors preſent!
See where in dreadful majeſty they ſit!
And write thy doom in Agamemnon's blood!
Egiſt. Think not to ſhake me with thy gloomy fables:
This arm that has acquir'd, ſhall guard my power;
And ſince I now enjoy my long-wiſh'd vengeance,
All here is calm and chearful.
Caſ. The falſe boaſt
Of agonizing guilt! Thy ſoul I ſee,
Beneath this hard'ned pride, this brutal courage,
Boils with black torments, and with inward tempeſt.
I know whence breaks the gleam of joy athwart thee,

As lightning flashes o'er a troubled sky:
Thou dream'st the prince now falls beneath thy fury:
But hear and tremble—young Orestes lives!

Egist. Hence with thy vain predictions, doating woman!—

SCENE VII.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, *&c. and to them assassins sent to murder* ORESTES.

Egist. Well, is Orestes dead?

Ass. Ah, sir! escap'd—
When all was in confusion, here, and tumult.

Egist. O nothing then is done!—Fly! tardy villains!
Pursue him to the fartheſt verge of earth,——
No dark retreat, no country.—But here comes
Another storm. Distraction wings her pace.

SCENE V.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, *&c.*

Clyt. Off! give me way! to deserts let me fly!
The wildeſt savage there!——
Why pierce me thus with looks?—In every eye
There is a dagger; chief in thine (to Egisthus)—
Ha! villain!
I know thee; know theſe eyes, where sm[illegible]g love

To

To the red glarings of a fury's torch
Is now transform'd.—— Yes, traitor! turn away:
But, ere you go, give me my peace again;
Give me my happy family around;
Give me my virtue, honour, nay, my glory;
Or give me death, tho' death cannot relieve me.—
Are theſe the deeds of love?—I cannot ſtep,
Unleſs I dip my ſhivering feet in blood.
Compar'd with this polluted, this dire palace,
The ſepulchre is gay.—But whither fly?——
Since from themſelves they cannot!—Ha! behold!
The black abyſs diſcloſes to my view;
And down I go, a dark, a deep deſcent!——
Hell from beneath is mov'd at my approach:
Its princes flock around. Behold, they ſay,
The greatly-wretched, greatly-wicked woman!
She who prefer'd the villain to the hero!
The Trojan ſhades, with ſharp deriſion, thank me:
The Grecian droop--Lo! where he comes himſelf!
See! How in ſullen majeſty he ſtalks!---
Oh look not on me with that ſilent ſcorn!
I am too curs'd already——

[*Faints into the arms of her attendants.*

Egiſ. Bear her hence:
And look ſhe be attended well.---But hark!
What new alarm?

SCENE

SCENE IX.

ÆGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, *&c. to them a* MESSENGER.

Meſ. As Meliſander, ſir,
Bore off Oreſtes, to the aſſembled ſenate
He ſhow'd the prince, and rouz'd them to revenge.
'Tis nought but rage. The people, in a torrent,
By Arcas headed, pour upon the palace.
Beſides, each moment Agamemnon's troops—

Egiſt. Quick, ſummon here my friends—In Io's grove
They ready wait. We this important day
Will or with conqueſt crown, or bravely die.

Caſ. No, tyrant, no! the gods refuſe thee that:
Not like the brave, but like the trembling coward,
Th' aſſaſſinating coward, thou ſhalt die;
There! in that ſpot, where Agamemnon lies!

Egiſt. Lead theſe ill-boding women to their fate;
And guard Electra.

Caſ. The moſt grateful gift
A tyrant can beſtow is inſtant death.
We ſhall be happy ſoon. But all the gods,
Combining all their mercy, from remorſe,
From ſcorn and misery can not ſave the villain.

The End of the Fifth Act.

EPI-

EPILOGUE

Spoken by Mrs *CIBBER*.

OUR bard, to modern epilogue a foe,
Thinks ſuch mean mirth but deadens generous woe;
Diſpels in idle air the moral ſigh,
And wipes the tender tear from pity's eye:
No more with ſocial warmth the boſom burns:
But all th' unfeeling ſelfiſh man returns.

Thus he began:—And you approv'd the ſtrain:
'Till the next couplet ſunk to light and vain.
You check'd him there—To you, to reaſon juſt,
He owns he triumph'd in your kind diſguſt.
Charm'd by your frown, by your diſpleaſure gr[illegible]d,
He hails the riſing virtue of your taſte.
Wide will its influence ſpread as ſoon as known:
Truth, to be lov'd, needs only to be ſhown.

* Another epilogue was ſpoken after the firſt repreſentation of the play, which began with the firſt ſix lines of this: but the reſt of that epilogue having been very juſtly diſliked by the audience, this was ſubſtituted in its place.

Con-

Conform it, once, the fashion to be good:
(Since fashion leads the fool, and awes the rude)
No petulance shall wound the public ear;
No hand applaud what honour shuns to hear:
No painful blush the modest cheek shall stain:
The worthy breast shall heave with no disdain.
Chastis'd to decency, the British *stage*
Shall oft invite the fair, invite the sage:
Both shall attend well-pleas'd, well-pleas'd depart:
Or, if they doom the verse, absolve the heart.

ALFRED.

ALFRED:

A

MASQUE.

Repreſented before their Royal Highneſſes the PRINCE and PRINCESS of *Wales*, at *Cliffden*, on the firſt of *Auguſt*, 1740.

By Mr THOMSON and Mr MALLET.

Si velimus cum priorum temporum *neceſſitate certare, vincimur. Ingenioſior eſt enim ad* excogitandum *ſimulatio, veritate; ſervitus, libertate; metus, amore.* Plin. Pan. Trajan.

The ARGUMENT.

After the Danes had made themſelves maſters of Chippenham, the ſtrongeſt city in the kingdom of Weſſex; Alfred was at once abandoned by all his ſubjects. In this univerſal defection, that monarch found himſelf obliged to retire into the little iſle of Athelney in Somerſetſhire; a place then rough with woods, and of difficult acceſs. There, in the habit of a peaſant, he lived unknown, for ſome time, in a ſhepherd's cottage. He is ſuppoſed to be found in this retreat by the Earl of Devon, whoſe caſtle, upon the river Tau, was then beſieged by the Danes.

The PERSONS.

ALFRED,	Mr MILWARD.
ELTRUDA,	Mrs HORTON.
HERMIT,	Mr QUIN.
EARL of *Devon*,	Mr MILLS.
CORNI, a ſhepherd,	Mr SALWAY.
EMMA, his wife,	Mrs CLIVE.

A Bard, Soldiers, Spirits.

The SCENE *repreſents a plain, ſurrounded with woods. On one ſide, a cottage: on the other, flocks and herds in diſtant proſpect. A hermit's cove in full view overhung with trees, wild and groteſque.*

ALFRED:

A

MASQUE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

CORIN, EMMA.

Em. SHepherd, 'tis he. Beneath yon aged oak,
All on the flowery turf he lays him down.
Cor. Soft: let us not diſturb him. Gentle Emma,
Poor though he be, unfriended and unknown,
My pity waits with reverence on his fortune.
Modeſt of carriage, and of ſpeech moſt gracious,
As if ſome ſaint or angel in diſguiſe,
Had grac'd our lowly cottage with his preſence,
He ſteals, I know not how, into the heart,

And makes it pant to ſerve him. Truſt me, Emma,
He is no common man.

Em. Some lord, perhaps,
Or valiant chief, that from our deadly foe,
The haughty, cruel, unbelieving Dane,
Seeks ſhelter here.

Cor. And ſhelter he ſhall find.
Who loves his country, is my friend and brother.
Behold him well. Fair virtue in his aſpect,
Even thro' the homely ruſſet that conceals him,
Shines forth, and proves him noble. Seeſt thou, Emma,
Yon weſtern clouds? The ſun they ſtrive to hide,
Yet darts his beam around.

Em. Your thought is mine;
He is not what his preſent fortunes ſpeak him.
But, ah! the raging foe is all around us:
We dare not keep him here.

Cor. Content thee, wife:
This iſland is of ſtrength. Nature's own hand
Hath planted round a deep defence of woods,
The ſounding aſh, the mighty oak; each tree
A ſheltering grove; and choak'd up all between
With wild encumbrance of perplexing thorns,
And horrid brakes. Beyond this woody verge,
Two rivers broad and rapid hem us in.
Along their channel ſpreads the gulfy pool,
And trembling quagmire, whoſe deceitful green
Betrays the foot it tempts. One path alone
Winds to this plain, ſo roughly difficult,
This ſingle arm, poor ſhepherd as I am,
Could well diſpute it with twice twenty Danes.

Em.

Em. Yet think, my Corin, on the ſtern decree
Of that proud foe, "Who harbours or relieves
"An Engliſh captain, dies the death of traitors:
"But who their haunts diſcovers, ſhall be ſafe,
"And high rewarded."

Cor. Now, juſt heaven forbid,
A Britiſh man ſhould ever count for gain
What villainy muſt earn. No: are we poor?
Be honeſty our riches. Are we mean,
And humbly born? The true heart makes us noble:
Theſe hands can toil, can ſow the ground and reap
For thee and thy ſweet babes. Our daily labour
Is daily wealth: it finds us bread and raiment.
Could Daniſh gold give more! And for the death
Theſe tyrants threaten, let me rather meet it,
Than e'er betray my gueſt.——

Em. Alas the while,
That loyal faith is fled from hall and bower,
To dwell with village ſwains!

Cor. Ah look! behold!
Where, like ſome goodly tree by win'try winds
Torn from the roots and withering, our ſad gueſt
Lies on the ground diffus'd.

Em. I weep to ſee it.

Cor. Thou haſt a heart ſweet pity loves to dwell in.
Dry up thy tears; and lean on this juſt hope:
If yet to do away his country's ſhame.
To ſerve her bravely on ſome bleſt occaſion,
If for theſe ends this ſtranger fought our cottage,
The heavenly hoſts are hovering here unſeen,

To watch and to protect him.—But oh! when—
My heart burns for it—shall I see the hour
Of vengeance on these Danish infidels,
That war with heaven and us?

Em. Alas, my love!
These passions are not for the poor man's state.
To heaven, and to the rulers of the land,
Leave such ambitious thoughts. Be warn'd, my Corin:
And think our little all depends on thee.

SONG.

O Peace! the fairest child of heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given.
The vale, the fountain and the grove,
With every softer scene of love:
Return, sweet Peace! and chear the weeping swain!
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.

Cor. Hush! cease thy song—For see our mournful guest
Has rais'd his head---and lo! who comes to greet him;
His friend, the woodman of the neighbouring dale,
Whom late, as yester evening-star arose,
At his request I found, and hither brought.

SCENE II.

ALFRED, *Earl of* DEVON.

Alf. How long, O ever-gracious heaven! how long
Shall war thus deſolate this proſtrate land?
All, all is loſt—And Alfred lives to tell it!
His cities laid in duſt! his ſubjects ſlaughter'd!
Or into ſlaves debas'd! the murderous foe
Proud and exulting in the general ſhame!—
Are theſe things ſo? and he without the means
Of great revenge? caſt down below the hope
Of ſuccouring thoſe he weeps for! O deſpair!
O grief of griefs!

Dev. Old as I am, my liege,
In rough war harden'd, and with death familiar,
Theſe eyes have long forgot to melt with ſoftneſs:
But O, my gracious maſter, they have ſeen——
All-pitying heaven!—ſuch ſights of ruthleſs rage,
Of total deſolation—

Alf. O, my people!
O ruin'd England!—Devon, thoſe were beſt,
Who dy'd before this time. Ha! and thoſe robbers,
That violate the ſanctity of leagues,
The reverend ſeal of oaths; that baſely broke,
Like nightly ruffians, on the hour of peace,
And ſtole a victory from men unarm'd,
Thoſe Danes enjoy their crimes! dread vengeance!
ſon

Of

Of power and juſtice! come, array'd in terrors,
Thy garment red with blood, thy keen ſword drawn:
O come, and on the heads of faithleſs men
Pour ample retribution; men whoſe triumph
Upbraids eternal juſtice.—But no more:
Submiſſion is heaven's due.—I will not launch
Into the dark abyſs where thought muſt drown.
Proceed, my lord: on with the mournful tale
My griefs broke off.

Dev. From yonder heath-crown'd hill,
This iſland's eaſtern point, wherein one ſtream
The Thone and Parret roll their blending waves,
I look'd, and ſaw the progreſs of the foe,
As of ſome tempeſt, ſome devouring fire,
That ruins without mercy where it ſpreads.
The riches of the year, the golden grain
That liberal crown'd our plains, lies trampled wide
By hoſtile feet, or rooted up; and waſte
Deforms the broad high-way. From ſpace to ſpace
Far as my ſtraining eye could ſhoot its beam,
Trees, cottages, and caſtles, ſmoke to heaven
In one aſcending cloud. But oh for pity!
That way, my lord, where yonder verdant height
Declining ſlides into a fruitful vale,
Unſightly now and bare; a few poor hinds,
Gray-hair'd, and thinly clad, ſtood and beheld
The common ravage: motionleſs and mute
With hands to heaven uprais'd, they ſtood, and
wept—
My tears attended theirs—

Alf. If this ſad ſight

Cour-

Could pain thee to ſuch anguiſh, what muſt I
Their king and parent feel?—It is a torment
Beyond the ſtrength of patience to endure.
Why end I not at once this wretched being?
The means are in my hand.—But ſhall a prince
Thus poorly ſhroud him in the grave from pain,
And ſenſe of ſhame? The madman, nay, the coward,
Has often dar'd the ſame. A monarch holds
His life in truſt for others. I will live then:
Let heaven diſpoſe the reſt.

Dev. Thrice-noble Alfred,
And England's only hope, whoſe virtues raiſe
Our frail mortality, our human duſt,
Up to angelic ſplendor and perfection;
With you to bear the worſt of ills, the ſpoil
Of waſteful war, the loſs of life or freedom,
Is happineſs, is glory.

Alf. Ah, look round thee:
That mud-built cottage is thy ſovereign's palace.
Yon hind, whoſe daily toil is all his wealth,
Lodges and feeds him. Are theſe times for flattery,
Or call it praiſe? ſuch gaudy attributes
Would miſbecome our beſt and proudeſt fortunes,
But what are mine? what is this high prais'd Alfred?
Among ten thouſand wretches moſt undone.
That prince who ſees his country laid in ruins,
His ſubjects periſhing beneath the ſword
Of foreign rage, who ſees, and cannot ſave them,
Is but ſupreme in miſery.

Dev. My Liege,
Who has not known ill fortune, never knew
Him-

Himſelf or his own virtue. Be of comfort:
We can but die at laſt. Till that hour comes,
Let nobler anger keep our hopes alive.
A ſudden thought, as if from heaven inſpir'd,
Darts on my ſoul. One caſtle ſtill is ours,
Tho' cloſe beſiegirt and ſhaken by the Danes.
In this diſguiſe, my chance of paſſing on,
Of entering there unknown, is promiſing,
And wears a lucky face. 'Tis our laſt ſtake,
And I will play it like a man, whoſe life,
Whoſe honour hangs upon a ſingle caſt.
Mean while, my lord———

Alf. Ha! Devon, thou haſt rous'd
My ſlumbering virtue. I applaud thy thought,
The praiſe of this brave daring ſhall be thine:
The danger ſhall be common. We will both
Strait tempt the Daniſh camp, and gain this fort;
To animate our brothers of the war,
Thoſe Engliſſimen who yet deſerve that name,
And hear, eternal juſtice! if my life
Can make atonement for them, King of Kings!
Accept thy willing victim. On my head
Be all their woes: To them be grace and mercy.
Come on, my noble friend.

Dev. Ah, good my liege,
What fits a private valour, and might grace
The ſimple ſoldier's courage, would proclaim
His general's raſhneſs. You are England's king:
Your infant-children, and your much lov'd queen;
Nay more, the public weal, ten thouſand ſouls,
Whoſe hope you are, whoſe all depends on you,

For-

Forbid this enterprize. 'Tis nobler virtue
To check this ardour, to reſerve your ſword
For ſome great day of known and high import;
That to your country, to the judging world,
Shall juſtify all hazards you may run.
This trial ſuits but me.

Alf. Well, go, my friend;
If thou ſhalt proſper, thou wilt call me hence
To head my people from their fears recover'd.
May that good angel, who inſpir'd thy thought,
Throw round thy ſteps a veil of cloudy air,
That thou may'ſt walk inviſible and ſafe.
He's gone—and now without a friend to aid me,
I ſtand alone, abandon'd to the gloom
Of my ſad thoughts—Said I without a friend?
Oh blaſphemous diſtruſt! Have I not Thee,
All powerful friend and guardian of the righteous,
Have I not Thee to aid me? Let that thought
Support my drooping ſoul.—But, liſt. Ha! whence
Theſe air-born notes that ſound in meaſur'd ſweetneſs
Thro' this vaſt ſilence?

SCENE

SCENE III.

Solemn muſic is heard at a diſtance. It comes nearer in a full ſymphony: after which a ſingle trumpet ſounds a high and awakening air. Then the following ſtanzas are ſung by two aërial ſpirits unſeen.

Firſt SPIRIT.

Hear Alfred, father of the ſtate,
Thy genius heaven's high will declare!
What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to deſpair,
Is never to deſpair.

Second SPIRIT.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand
With all its vigour, all its fires.
Ariſe! and ſave a ſinking land!
Thy country calls, and heaven inſpires.

Both SPIRITS.

Earth calls, and heaven inſpires.

SCENE IV.

ALFRED, *alone.*

All hail, ye gentle miniſters of heaven!
Your ſong inſpires new patience thro' my breaſt,
And generous hope: it wings my mounting ſoul
Above th' entangling maſs of earthly paſſions,
That keep frail man, tho' ſtruggling to be free,
Still fluttering in the duſt.

SCENE

SCENE V.

ALFRED, *the* HERMIT *advancing from his cave.*

Alf. Thrice-happy Hermit!
Whom thus the heavenly habitants attend,
Bleſſing thy calm retreat; while ruthleſs war
Fills the polluted land with blood and crimes.
In this extremity of England's fate,
Led by thy ſacred character, I come
For comfort and advice. Thy aged wiſdom,
Purg'd from the ſtormy cloud of human paſſions,
And by a ray from heaven exalted, ſees
Deep thro' futurity. Say, what remains,
What yet remains to ſave our proſtrate country!
Nor ſcorn this anxious queſtion even from me,
A nameleſs ſtranger.

Herm. Alfred, England's king,
All hail! and welcome to this humble cell.

Alf. Whence doſt thou know me, venerable father?

Herm. Laſt night, when with a draught from that cool fountain
I had my wholſome, ſober ſupper crown'd;
As is my ſtated cuſtom, forth I walk'd,
Beneath the ſolemn gloom and glittering ſky,
To feed my ſoul with prayer and meditation.
And thus to inward harmony compos'd,
That ſweeteſt muſic of the grateful heart,

Whoſe each emotion is a ſilent hymn,
I to my couch retir'd. Strait on mine eyes
A pleaſing ſlumber fell, whoſe myſtic power
Seal'd up my ſenſes, but enlarg'd my ſoul,
At once, diſclos'd amid the dark waſte night,
Appear'd a viſion—not the dream of fancy,
But ſent from heaven, prophetic, and divine.
For know, this ample element contains
Unnumber'd ſpiritual beings, or malign,
Or good to man. Theſe, when the groſſer eye
Of nature ſleeps, oft play their ſeveral parts,
As on a ſcene, before th' attentive mind,
And to the favour'd man diſcloſe the future.
Led by theſe ſpirits friendly to this iſle,
I liv'd thro' future ages; felt the virtue,
The great, the glorious paſſions that will fire
Diſtant poſterity: when guardian laws
Are by the patriot in the glowing ſenate
Won from corruption, when th' impatient arm
Of liberty, invincible, ſhall ſcourge
The tyrants of mankind—and when the deep,
Thro' all her ſwelling waves ſhall proudly joy
Beneath the boundleſs empire of thy ſons.
I ſaw thee, Alfred, too—But o'er thy fortunes
Lay clouds impregnable.

Alf. Ah, good hermit,
That ſcene is dark indeed! Ye awful powers!
To what am I reſerved? Still muſt I roam
A wanderer here, inglorious and unknown?
Or am I deſtin'd your great inſtrument,
From fierce oppreſſion to redeem this land?

Herm.

Herm. Perhaps, the laſt.—But, prince, remember, then,
The vows, the noble uſes of affliction,
Preſerve the quick humanity it gives,
The pitying, ſocial ſenſe of human weakneſs:
Yet keep thy ſtubborn fortitude entire,
The manly heart that to another's wo
Is tender, but ſuperior to its own.
Learn to ſubmit; yet learn to conquer fortune.
Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life: to life itſelf,
With all its vain and tranſient joys, ſit looſe.
Chief, let devotion to the ſovereign mind,
A ſteady, chearful, abſolute dependence
On his beſt, wiſeſt government poſſeſs thee.
In thoughtleſs, gay proſperity, when all
Attends our wiſh, when nought is ſeen around us
But kneeling flattery, and obedient fortune;
Then are blind mortals apt, within themſelves
To fix their ſtay, forgetful of the giver.
But when thus humbled, Alfred, as thou art,
When to their feeble natural powers reduc'd,
'Tis then they feel this univerſal truth—
That heav'n is all in all—and man is nothing.

Alf. I thank thee, father for thy pious counſel.
And witneſs, thou dread power! who ſeeſt my heart;
That if not to perform my regal taſk,
To be the common father of my people,
Patron of honour, virtue, and religion;
If not to ſhelter induſtry, to guard
Her honeſt portion from oppreſſive pride,

From wasteful riot, and the sons of rapine,
Who basely ravish what they dare not earn;
The treasures trusted to me, not my own,
On all the smiling ranks of nourish'd life;
If not to raise our drooping English name,
To clothe it yet with terror; make this land
Renown'd for peaceful arts to bless mankind,
And generous war to humble proud oppressors:
If not to build on an eternal base,
On liberty and laws, the public weal:
If not for these great ends I am ordain'd,
May I ne'er idly fill the throne of England!

Herm. Still may thy breast these sentiments retain;
In prosperous life.

Alf. Prosperity were ruin,
Could it destroy or change such thoughts as these.
When Those whom heaven distinguishes o'er millions,
Profusely gives them honours, riches, power,
Whate'er th' expanded heart can wish; when they,
Accepting the reward, neglect the duty;
Or worse, prevent those gifts to deeds of ruin:
Is there a wretch they rule so mean as they?
Guilty, at once, of sacrilege to heaven,
And of perfidious robbery to men——
But hark! methinks I hear a plaintive voice
Sigh thro' the vale, and wake the mournful echo.

SONG

SONG.

I.

Sweet valley, ſay, where, penſive lying,
For me, our children, England, ſighing,
The beſt of mortals leans his head.
Ye fountains, dimpled by my ſorrow,
Ye brooks, that my complainings borrow,
O lead me to his lonely bed:
Or if my lover,
Deep woods, you cover,
Ah whiſper where your ſhadows o'er him ſpread!

II.

'Tis not the loſs of pomp and pleaſure,
Of empire, or of tinſel treaſure,
That drops this tear, that ſwells this groan:
No: from a nobler cauſe proceeding,
A heart with love and fondneſs bleeding,
I breathe my ſadly-pleaſing moan,
With other anguiſh
I ſcorn to languiſh:
For love will feel no ſorrow but his own.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

ALFRED, HERMIT, ELTRUDA, *advancing.*

Alf. Sure, by the voice, and purport of the ſong,
This generous mourner is my queen Eltruda.
And yet how can that be?—O all good powers!
'Tis ſhe! 'tis ſhe!

Elt. My lord, my life, my Alfred!
Oh take me to thy arms, with toil o'ercome,
And ſudden tranſport, thus at once to find thee,
In this wild foreſt, pathleſs and perplext!

Alf. Come to my ſoul, thou deareſt, beſt of women!
Come, and repoſe thy ſorrows in my boſom.
O all my paſſions mix in doubtful ſtrife!
If pain or joy prevail, I ſcarce can ſay,
While thus I claſp thee, and recall the perils
To which thy trembling ſteps have been expos'd.
Why haſt thou left the convent where I plac'd thee?
Why, unprotected, truſt thee to a land,
A barbarous land, where rages Daniſh war!
Our hoſpitable England is no more!

Elt. Dire was the cauſe, my Alfred. The rous'd country,
All wild in breathleſs terror and confuſion,
Inform'd us, a near party of the Danes,
Whoſe brutal fury ſpares no ſex, no age,
No place however priviledg'd or holy,

Were on full march that way. Instant I fled,
In this disguise, with only these attendants:
But in our way oft chear'd by airy voices,
To bear to this retreat our helpless children.
Alf. Ah wanderers too young! ah hapless children!
But more unhappy Sire! who cannot give,
To those he loves, protection.
Elt. Thou too Alfred,
Art thou not unattended? None to serve thee,
To sooth thy woes, to watch thy broken slumbers!
And when the silent tear o'erflows thy eye,
None, with the warm and cordial lip of love,
To kiss it off! There is in love a power,
There is a soft divinity that draws
Transport even from distress; that gives the heart
A certain pang, excelling far the joys
Of gross unfeeling life. Besides, my Alfred,
Even had the fury of this barbarous foe
Not forc'd me from the convent, life is short;
And now it trembles on the wing of danger:
Why should we lose it then? One well-sav'd hour,
In such a tender circumstance to lovers,
Is better than one age of common time.
Alf. Oh 'tis too much! thy tenderness o'ercomes me!
Nay, look not on me with that sweet dejection,
Thro' tears that pierce my soul!—Chear thee, my love,
Hope still the best; that better days await us,
And fairer from remembrance.—Thou, Elfruda,

Thou

Thou art a pledge of happineſs! On thee
Good angels wait; they led thy journey hither:
And I have heard them, in this wild retreat,
Warbling immortal airs, and ſtrains of comfort.
But ah the foe is round us! and this iſle
Now holds my ſoul's beſt wealth, the treaſur'd ſtore
Of all my joys.—I go to ſkirt it round,
To viſit every creek and ſedgy bank,
Where ruſtles thro' the reeds the ſhadowy gale;
Or where the bending umbrage drinks the ſtream;
Leſt danger unawares ſhould ſteal upon us.
And now, by ſlow degrees, ſolemn and ſad,
Wide falling o'er the world, the nightly ſhades
Huſh the brown woods, and deepen all their horrors:
While humbled into reſt, and aw'd by darkneſs,
Each creature ſeeks the covert. To that cell
Retire, my life. I will not long be abſent.

The End of the Firſt Act.

ACT. II. SCENE. I.

ALFRED, *alone.*

'TIS now the depth of darkneſs and repoſe.
All nature ſeems to reſt: while Alfred wakes
To think, and to be wretched.—Where yon oak
With wide and duſky ſhade o'erhangs the ſtream,
That glides in ſilence by, I took my ſtand:
What time the glow-worm through the dewy path
Firſt ſhot his twinkling flame. I ſtood attentive,
Liſtening each noiſe from wood-clad hill and dale;
But all was huſh'd around. Nor trumpet's clang,
Nor ſhout of roving foe, nor haſty tread
Of evening paſſenger, diſturb'd the wide
And awful ſtillneſs. Homeward as I ſped,
O'er many a delve, through many a path perplext,
Maze running into maze; ill-boding thoughts
Haunted my ſteps.—Perhaps my gallant friend,
Diſcover'd to the Danes, this moment bleeds
Beneath their ſwords! or lies a breathleſs corſe,
The prey of midnight wolves.—Some mournful ſound
Strikes ſudden on my ſenſe.

SCENE

SCENE II.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA.

Elt. Here will I lean
On this green bank, to wait the wiſh'd return
Of morning, and my lord.
Alf. My gentle love,
Eltruda, why to this untimely ſky
Expoſe thy health? The dews of night fall faſt:
The chill breeze ſighs aloud.
Elt. I could not reſt.
Can love repoſe when apprehenſion wakes,
And whiſpers to the heart all dreadful things,
That walk with night and ſolitude? Methought,
In each low murmur of the woods, I heard
Th' invading foe—or heard my Alfred groan!
Our tender infants too—their fancy'd cries
Still ſound within my ears!
Alf. Eltruda, there
I am a woman too: I who ſhould cheer,
And ſhelter thee from every care. My children!
Th... thought of what may chance to them, completes
Their father's ſum of woes. O what ſafe ſhade
Can ſkreen their opening bloſſom from the ſtorm
That beats ſevere on us! Not ſweeter buds
The primroſe in the vale, nor ſooner ſhrinks
At winter's churliſh blaſt—

Elt.

Elt. Behold, my lord —
Good angels ſhield us—What a flood of brightneſs
Waves round our heads!
Alf. The hermit moves this way.
That wondrous man holds converſe with the hoſt
Of higher natures. Theſe far beaming fires
Were doubtleſs kindled up at his command.
Be ſilent and attentive.

SCENE III.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT.

Her. I have heard
Thy fond complainings, Alfred.
Alf. You have then,
Good father, heard the cauſe that wrings them from me.
Her. The human race are ſons of ſorrow born:
And each muſt have his portion. Vulgar minds
Refuſe or crouch beneath their load: the brave
Bear theirs without repining.
Alf. Who can bear
The ſhaft that wounds him thro' an infant's ſide?
When whom we love, to whom we owe protection,
Implore the hand we cannot reach to ſave them?
Her. Weep not, Eltruda.—Yet thou art a king,

All

[illegible] paſſions fall before that name.
All my ſubjects claim thee whole.
Alf. Can public truſt,
O reverend ſage! deſtroy the ſofter ties
That twine around the parent's yearning heart,
That holy paſſion heaven itſelf infus'd,
And blended with the ſtream that feeds our life.
Her. You love your children, prince——
Alf. Lives there on earth,
In air, or ocean, creature tame or wild
That has not known this univerſal love?
All nature feels it intimate and deep,
And all her ſons of inſtinct or of reaſon.
Her. Then ſhew that paſſion in its nobleſt form,
Seaſon their tender years with every virtue,
Social or ſelf-retir'd; of public greatneſs,
Or lovely in the hour of private life:
With all that can exalt, or can adorn
Their princely rank.
Alf. Alas, their hope muſt ſtoop,
Such my unhappy fate, to humbler aims:
Affliction and baſe wants muſt be their teachers.
Her. Affliction is the wholeſome ſoil of virtue:
Where patience, honour, ſweet humanity,
Calm fortitude take root, and ſtrongly flouriſh.
But proſperous fortune, that allures with pleaſure,
Dazzles with pomp, and undermines with flattery,
Poiſons the ſoil, and its beſt product kills.
Should'ſt thou regain thy throne——
Alf. My throne? What glimpſe,
What ſmalleſt ray of hope——

Her.

Her. That day may come—
What do I feel? My labouring breaſt expands
To give the glorious inſpiration room.
And now the cloud that o'er thy future fate,
Like total night, lay heavy and obſcure,
Fades into air: and all the brightening ſcene
Dawns gay before me! A long line of kings,
From thee deſcending, glorious and renown'd,
In ſhadowy pomp I ſee!

Genius of England! hovering near,
In all thy radiant charms appear.

O come and ſummon, from the world unknown,
Thoſe mighty chiefs, thoſe ſons of future fame,
Who ages hence, this iſland ſhall adorn,
And ſpread to diſtant realms her glorious name.
Slow let the viſionary forms ariſe,
And ſolemn paſs before our wondering eyes.

[*Muſic grand and awful. The Genius deſcending, ſings the following*

SONG.

From thoſe eternal regions bright,
Where ſuns, that never ſet in night,
Diffuſe the golden day:
Where ſpring unfading pours around,
O'er all the dew-impearled ground,
Her thouſand colours gay;

Or whether on the fountain's flowery ſide,
Whence living waters glide,
Or in the fragrant grove,
Whoſe ſhade emboſoms peace and love,
New pleaſures all your hours employ,
And laviſh every ſenſe with every joy!
Great heirs of empire! yet unborn,
Who ſhall this iſland late adorn;
A monarch's drooping thought to chear,
Appear! appear! appear!

Spirit of EDWARD III. PHILIPPA *his queen,*
and the Black Prince *his ſon, ariſe.*

Her. Alfred, look; and ſay,
What ſeeſt thou yonder?
Alf. Three majeſtic ſhapes:
Two habited like mighty warriors old;
A third in whoſe bright aſpect beauty ſmiles
More ſoft and feminine. A lucid veil,
From her fair neck dependent floats around,
Light-hovering in the gale.
Her. O Alfred, man
Belov'd of heaven, behold a king indeed;
Matchleſs in arms; in arts of peaceful rule,
A ſovereign's trueſt glory, yet more fam'd,
England's third Edward!—At his fear'd approach,
Proud France, even now, thro' all her dukedoms quakes.
Her Genius ſighs: and from th' eternal ſhore,
The ſoul of her great Charles, a recent gueſt,
Looks back to earth, and mourns the diſtant woes,
His

His realms are doom'd to feel from Edward's wrath.
Beneath his ſtandard, Britain ſhall go forth,
Array'd for conqueſt, terrible in glory:
And nations ſhrink before her. O what deaths,
What deſolation ſhall her vengeance ſpread,
From engines yet unfound; whoſe lightnings flaſh,
Whoſe thunder roars, amazing, o'er the plain:
As if this king had ſummon'd from on high
Heaven's dread artillery to fight his battle!
Nor is renown in war his ſole ambition:
A nobler paſſion labours in his breaſt——
Alfred attend—to make his people bleſt!
The ſacred rights that reaſon loudly claims
For free-born men—theſe, Alfred, are his care:
Oft to confirm, and fix them on the baſe
Of equal laws.—O father of mankind!
Succeſſive praiſes from a grateful land
Shall faint thy name for ever!

Alf. Holy ſage,
Whom angels thus enlighten and inſpire,
My boſom kindles at thy heaven-born flame.
Great Edward! Be thy conqueſts and their praiſe
Unrival'd to thy ſelf. But O thy fame
For care paternal of the public weal;
For England bleſt at home—my rapt heart pants
To equal that renown!

Her. Know farther, Alfred;
A ſovereign's great example forms a people.
The public breaſt is noble, or is vile,
As he inſpires it. In this Edward's time,
Warm'd by his courage, by his honour rais'd,

High flames the Britiſh ſpirit like the ſun,
To ſhine o'er half the globe: and where it ſhines,
The cheriſh'd world to brighten and enrich.
Laſt ſee this monarch in his hour of leiſure;
Even ſocial on a throne, and taſting joys
To ſolitary greatneſs ſeldom known,
As friend, as huſband, and as father bleſt.
That god-like Youth remark, his eldeſt hope,
Who gives new luſtre to the name he bears;
A hero ere a man.—I ſee him now
On Creſſy's glorious plain! The father's heart,
With anxious love and wonder at his daring,
Beats high in mingled tranſport. Great himſelf,
Great above jealouſy, the guilty mark
That brands all meaner minds, ſee he applauds
The filial excellence, and gives him ſcope
To blaze in his full brightneſs! Lo, again
He ſends him dreadful to a nobler field:
The danger and the glory all his own!
A captive king, the rival of his arms,
I ſee adorn his triumph! Heaven! what grace
What ſplendor from his gracious temper mild,
That triumph draws! As gentle mercy kind,
He chears the hoſtile prince whoſe fall he weeps!

Alf. A ſon ſo rich in virtues, and ſo grac'd
With all that gives thoſe virtues fair to ſhine,
When I would aſk of heaven ſome mighty boon,
Should claim the foremoſt place.

Her. Remember then,
What to thy infant ſons from thee is due,
As parent and as prince.

Alf.

Elt. Forgive me, Hermit,
Forgive a queen and wife her anxious fondneſs.
Yon beauteous ſhade, that as I gaze her o'er,
My wonder draws, eſcapes your graver thought.

Her. O bright Eltruda! thou whoſe blooming youth,
Whoſe amiable ſweetneſs promiſe bleſſings
To Alfred and to England! ſee, and mark,
In yonder pleaſing form, the beſt of wives,
The happieſt too, repaid with all the faith,
With all the friendſhip, love and duty claim.
She, powerful o'er the heart her charms enſlave —
O virtue rarely practis'd!—uſes nobly
That happy influence; to prompt each purpoſe
Fair honour kindles in her Edward's breaſt.
Amid the pomps, the pleaſures of a court,
Humble of heart, ſeverely good; the friend
Of modeſt worth, the parent of the poor.
Eltruda, O tranſmit theſe nobleſt charms
To that fair daughter, that unfolding roſe,
With which, * as on this day, heaven crown'd your loves.

The ſpirit of ELIZABETH *ariſes.*

Alf. Say, who is ſhe, in whom the nobler graces,
Th' engaging manner, dignity and eaſe;
Are join'd with manly ſenſe and reſolution?

* This maſque was written to be acted at Cliefden, on the birth-day of her Royal Highneſs the princeſs Auguſta.

Alf. The great Eliza. She, amid a world
That threatning swells in high commotion round her,
Each dangerous state her unrelenting foe,
And chief a proud enormous empire stretch'd
O'er half mankind; with not one friendly power,
But what her kind creating hand shall raise
From out the marshes of the branching Rhine;
And mind, at home, her ever-tottering throne
By restless bigots, who beneath the mask
Of mild religion, are to every crime
Set loose, the faithless sons of barbarous zeal:
Yet she shall crown this happy isle with peace,
With arts, with riches, grandeur and renown;
And quell, by turns, the madness of her foes.
As when the winds, from different quarters, urge
The tempest on our shore; secure, the cliffs
Repel its idle rage, and pour it back,
In broken billows, foaming to the main.

Alf. How shall she, Hermit, gain these glorious ends?

Herm. By silent wisdom, whole informing power
Works unperceiv'd: that seems in council slow;
But when resolv'd, and ripe for execution,
That darts like lightning from the secret gloom:
By ever seizing the right point of view,
Her truest interest; which the firm pursues,
With steady patience, thro' the maze of state,
The storm of opposition, the mixt views,
And thwarting maim'd passions of mankind;
By healing the divisions of her people
And sowing that fell pest among her foes:

By ſaving, from the vermin of a court,
Her treaſure; which, when fair occaſion calls,
She knows to laviſh, in protecting arts,
In guarding nations, and in nurſing ſtates:
By calling up to power, and public life,
Each virtue, each ability: yet ſhe,
Amid the various worthies glowing round her,
Still ſhines the firſt; the central ſun that wakes,
That rules their every motion: not the ſlave,
And paſſive property of her own creatures.
But the great ſoul that animates her reign,
That lights it to perfection, is the love,
The confidence unbounded, with her wiſdom,
Her probity and juſtice, ſhall inſpire
Into the public breaſt. Hence cordial faith,
What nought can ſhake; hence unexhauſted treaſure;
And hence, above all mercenary force,
The hand that by the freeborn heart is rais'd,
And guards the blended weal of Prince and People.
She too ſhall raiſe Britannia's naval power;
Shall greatly raviſh, from inſulting Spain,
The world-commanding ſceptre of the deep.

Elf. O matchleſs queen! O glory of her ſex!
The great idea, father, fills my ſoul,
And bids it glow beyond a woman's paſſions.

Spirit of WILLIAM III. *ariſes.*

Herm. Once more, O Alfred, raiſe thine eyes, and mark,

Who

Who next adorns the ſcene, yon laurel'd ſhade.
Ere yet the age that clos'd this female reign
Hath led around its train of circling years,
Shall Britain on the verge of ruin ſtand.
A monarch, loſt to greatneſs, to renown,
The ſlave of dreaming monks, ſhall fill her throne.
Weak and aſpiring; fond of lawleſs rule,
The lawleſs rule his mean ambition covets
Unequal to acquire. Yon prince thou ſaw'ſt,
To glory tutor'd by the hand ſevere
Of ſharp Adverſity, ſhall heaven upraiſe,
And injur'd nations with joint call invoke,
Their laſt, their only refuge. Lo! he comes:
Wide o'er the billows of the boundleſs deep
His navy rides triumphant: and the ſhores
Of ſhouting Albion echo with his name.
Immortal William! from before his face,
Flies Superſtition, flies oppreſſive Power,
With vile Servility that crouch'd and kiſs'd
The whip he trembled at. From this great hour
Shall Britain date her rights and laws reſtor'd:
And one high purpoſe rule her ſovereign's heart;
To ſcourge the pride of France, that foe profeſs'd
To England and to Freedom. Yet I ſee,
From diſtant climes, in peaceful triumph borne,
Another KING ariſe! His early youth
With verdant laurel crown'd, for deeds of arms
That Reaſon's voice approves; for courage, rais'd
Beyond all aid from paſſion, greatly calm!
Intrepidly ſerene!—In days of peace,
Around his throne the human virtues wait,

And

And fair adorn him with their mildeſt beams;
Good without ſhow, above ambition great;
Wiſe, equal, merciful, the friend of man!
O Alfred! ſhould thy fate, long ages hence,
In meaning ſcenes recall'd, exalt the joy
Of ſome glad feſtal day, before a prince
Sprung from that king belov'd----Hear, gracious heaven!
Thy ſoft humanity, thy patriot heart,
Thy manly virtue, ſteady, great, reſolv'd,
Be his ſupreme ambition! and with theſe,
The happineſs, the glory, that await
Thy better days, be ſhower'd upon his head!

Alf. O Hermit! thou haſt rais'd me to new life!
New hopes, new triumphs ſwell my bounding heart--

Herm. It comes! it comes!--The promis'd ſcene diſcloſes!
Already the great work of fate begins!
The mighty wheels are turning, whence will ſpread,
Beyond the limits of our narrow world,
The fair dominions, Alfred, of thy ſons.
Behold the warrior bright with Daniſh ſpoils!
The *raven* droops his wings---and hark! the trumper,
Exulting, ſpeaks the reſt.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Symphony of martial muſic.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *Earl of* DEVON, *followed by ſoldiers.*

Alf. My friend returned!
O welcome, welcome! but what happy tidings
Smile in thy chearful countenance?——
Dev. My Liege,
Your troops have been ſucceſsful—But to Heaven
Aſcend the praiſe! For ſure th' event exceeds
The hand of man.
Alf. How was it, noble Devon?
Dev. You know my caſtle is not hence far-diſtant.
Thither I ſped: and in a Daniſh habit
The trenches paſſing, by a ſecret way,
Known to myſelf alone, emerg'd at once
Amid my joyful ſoldiers. There I found
A generous few, the veteran, hardy gleanings
Of many a hapleſs fight. They with fierce
Heroic fire inſpirited each other;
Reſolv'd on death, diſdaining to ſurvive
Their deareſt country.—"If we fall," I cry'd,
"Let

" Let not us tamely fall like cowards!
" No: let us live---or let us die, like men!
" Come on, my friends: to Alfred we will cut
" Our glorious way; or, as we nobly periſh,
" Will offer to the genius of our country
" Whole hecatombs of Danes."---As if one ſoul
Had mov'd them all, around their heads they flaſh'd
Their flaming faulchions——" Lead us to thoſe
Danes!
" Our country!—vengeance!" was the general cry.
Strait on the careleſs drouſy camp we ruſh'd:
And rapid, as the flame devours the ſtubble,
Bore down the heartleſs Danes. With this ſucceſs
Our enterprize increas'd. Not now contented
To hew a paſſage thro' the flying herd;
We, unremitting, urg'd a total rout.
The valiant Hubba bites the bloody field,
With twice ſix hundred Danes around him ſtrow'd.
Alf. My glorious friend!---this action has reſtor'd
Our ſinking country.---What reward can equal
A deed ſo great?---Is not yon pictur'd *Raven*
Their famous magic ſtandard---Emblem fit
To ſpeak the ſavage genius of the people---
That oft has ſcatter'd on our troops diſmay,
And feeble conſternation?
Dev. 'Tis the ſame.
Wrought by the ſiſters of the Daniſh king,
Of furious Ivar, in a midnight hour:
While the ſick moon, at their enchanted ſong,
Wrapt in pale tempeſt, labour'd thro' the clouds,
The Demons of deſtruction then, they ſay,

Were

Were all abroad, and mixing with the woof
Their baleful power: The ſiſters ever ſung;
'Shake, ſtandard, ſhake, this ruin on our foes!"
Herm. So theſe infernal powers, with rays of truth,
Still deck their fables, to ſeclude who truſt them.
Alf. But where, my noble couſin, are the reſt
Of your brave troops?
Dav. On t'other ſide the ſtream,
That half incloſes this retreat, I left them.
Rous'd from the fear, with which it was congeal'd
As in a froſt, the country pours amain.
The ſpirit of our anceſtors is up,
The ſpirit of the Free! and with a voice
That breathes ſucceſs, they all demand their king.
Alf. Quick, let us join them, and improve their ardor.
We cannot be too haſty to ſecure
The glances of occaſion.

SCENE *the laſt.*

To them CORIN, EMMA, *kneeling to* ALFRED.

Cor. Good my Liege,
Pardon the poor unequal entertainment,
Which we, unknowing---
Alf. Riſe, my honeſt ſhepherd.
I came to thee a peaſant, not a prince:
Thy rural entertainment was ſuch fare,

Plain, hoſpitable, kind: ſuch as, I hope,
Will ever mark the manners of this nation.
You friendly lodg'd me, when by all deſerted:
And ſhall have ample recompence,
Cor. One boon,
Is all I crave.
Alf. Good ſhepherd, ſpeak thy wiſh.
Cor. Permiſſion, in your wars, to ſerve your Grace:
For tho' here loſt in ſolitary ſhades,
A ſimple ſwain, I bear an Engliſh heart:
A heart that burns with rage to ſee thoſe Danes,
Thoſe foreign ruffians, thoſe inhuman pirates,
Oft our inferiors prov'd, thus lord it o'er us.
Alf. Brave countryman, come on. 'Tis ſuch as thou,
Who from affection ſerve, and freeborn zeal,
To guard whate'er is dear and ſacred to them,
That are a king's beſt honour and defence.

EMMA *ſings the following* SONG.

I.

If thoſe who live in ſhepherd's bower,
Preſt not the rich and ſtately bed,
The new-mown hay and breathing flower
A ſofter couch beneath them ſpread.

II.

If thoſe who ſit at ſhepherd's board,
Soothe not their taſte by wanton art;
They take what nature's gift afford,
And take it with a chearful heart,

III.

If thoſe, who drain the ſhepherd's bowl,
No high and ſparkling wines can boaſt:
With wholeſome cups they chear the ſoul,
And crown them with the village toaſt.

IV.

If thoſe, who join in ſhepherd's ſport,
Gay-dancing on the daizy'd ground,
Have not the ſplendour of a court;
Yet love adorns the merry round.

Alf. My lov'd Eltruda! thou ſhalt here remain,
With gentle Emma, and this reverend hermit.
Ye ſilver ſtreams, that murmuring wind around
This duſky ſpot, to you I truſt my all!
O cloſe around her, woods! for her, ye vales,
Throw forth your flowers, your ſofteſt lap diffuſe!
And Thou! whoſe ſecret and expanſive hand
Moves all the ſprings of this vaſt univerſe:
Whoſe government aſtoniſhes; whoſe love,

In

In a few hours, beyond our utmoſt hope,
Beyond our thought, yet doubting, haſt clear'd up
The ſtorm of fate: preſerve what thy kind will,
Thy bountiful appointment, makes ſo dear
To human hearts! preſerve my queen and children!
Preſerve the hopes of England! while I go
To finiſh thy great work, and ſave my country.

Elt. Go, pay the debt of honour to the public,
If ever woman, Alfred, lov'd her huſband
More fondly than herſelf, I claim that virtue,
That heart-felt happineſs. Yet, by our loves
I ſwear, that in a glorious death with thee
I rather would be wrapt, than live long years
To charm thee from the rugged paths of honour:
So much I think thee born for beauteous deeds,
And the bright courſe of glory.

Alf. Matchleſs woman!
Love, at thy voice, is kindled to ambition.
Be this my deareſt triumph, to approve me
A huſband worthy of the beſt Eltruda!

Her. Behold, my lord, our venerable Bard,
Aged and blind, him whom the Muſes favour.
Yet ere you go, in our lov'd country's praiſe,
That nobleſt theme, hear what his rapture breathes.

An ODE.

I.

When Britain firſt, at heaven's command,
Aroſe from out the azure main;
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian Angels ſung this ſtrain:
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
"Britons never will be ſlaves."

II.

The nations, not ſo bleſt as thee,
Muſt, in their turns, to tyrants fall:
While thou ſhalt flouriſh great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
"Rule, &c.

III.

Still more majeſtic ſhalt thou riſe,
More dreadful from each foreign ſtroke:
As the loud blaſt that tear's the ſkies,
Serves but to root thy native oak.
"Rule, &c.

IV.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er ſhall tame:
All their attempts to bend thee down,
Will but arouſe thy generous flame;
But work their woe and thy renown,
"Rule, &c.

V.

To thee belongs the rural reign:
Thy cities ſhall with commerce ſhine:
All thine ſhall be the ſubject main,
And every ſhore it circles thine.
"Rule, &c.

VI.

The muſes, ſtill with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coaſt repair:
Bleſt iſle! with matchleſs beauty crown'd,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.
"Rule, Britannia, rules the waves;
"Britons never will be ſlaves."

Herm. Arise, go forth! lead on the radiant years
To thee reveal'd in viſion.—Lo! they riſe!
Lo! patriots, heroes, ſages, croud to birth:
And bards to ſing them in immortal verſe!
Lo! thy commerce, Britain, graſp the world:

All

All nations ſerve thee; every foreign flood,
Subjected pays its tribute to the Thames.
Thither the golden South obedient pours
His ſunny treaſures: thither the ſoft Eaſt
Her ſpices, delicacies, gentle gifts:
And thither his rough trade the ſtormy North.
See, where beyond the vaſt Atlantic ſurge,
By boldeſt keels untouch'd, a dreadful ſpace!
Shores, yet unfound, ariſe! in youthful prime,
With towering foreſts, mighty rivers crown'd:
Theſe ſtoop to Britain's thunder. This new world,
Shook to its centre, trembles at her name:
And there her ſons, with aim exalted, ſow
The ſeeds of riſing empire, arts, and arms.

Britons, proceed, the ſubject Deep command,
Awe with your navies every hoſtile land.
Vain are their threats, their armies all are vain:
They rule the balanc'd world, who rule the main.

The End of the THIRD VOLUME.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 June, 2016